

سكاي نيوز

THE AMERICAS

Parties Look for Ways to Deal With Impeachment's Aftermath

By Alison Mitchell
New York Times Service

WASHINGTON — As the Senate voted to keep its final deliberations on impeachment closed, the proponents of secrecy argued one last time that American juries always make their decisions in private. Yet, even as they scored a victory, time was passing them by.

With President Bill Clinton's acquittal certain later this week, impeachment is rapidly moving out of the trial phase and into the realm of pure politics. After the yearlong scandal over the president's affair with Monica Lewinsky and five months of congressional impeachment proceedings, the political parties have

begun their effort, for both the 2000 campaign and for history, to explain what the impeachment drive of the past year was all about.

Mr. Clinton has almost two years left to try to find some major achievements that could counterbalance for history the scandal that followed his sexual encounters with a White House intern. Republicans are searching for a way to defy the verdict of current public opinion and have this impeachment judged more kindly than the 1868 trial of President Andrew Johnson, which is viewed today as a partisan vendetta. And congressional Democrats are hoping to ride the public anger over

Mr. Clinton's impeachment to win control of the House and possibly even the Senate.

All of these calculations are now coming into play in the endgame of this trial. For that reason it was only Republicans on Tuesday who voted to keep deliberations closed. Although many said they thought the senators might yet sway each other, others said that they were trying to cut off partisan posturing and keep the Democrats from using their speeches to stoke a backlash against Republicans.

Senator John Kerry, Democrat of Massachusetts, who is weighing a presidential bid, showed just what the Republicans were looking to avoid when he

said that he wanted to make the conduct of the independent counsel, Kenneth Starr, a critical element of the final debate.

"All we have in front of us is a crime, so-called, that arose out of a private consensual affair," he told reporters, "and I think most Americans understand that that crosses the zone of privacy that has serious implications for constitutional rights and fairness. I think that is a part of this case."

The Republicans by contrast want to change the subject fast.

Senator Trent Lott, the majority leader, urged senators as they deliberate to remember "that Lincoln gave his Gettysburg Address in less than three

minutes and Kennedy's first inaugural was slightly over seven minutes."

To show they are ready to move beyond impeachment, the Republicans have bills ready to move on military salaries and education and are poised to begin a debate over tax cutting. "We need to pivot and go on and get the impeachment behind us and start really talking about the business that people do care about," the new House speaker, Representative Dennis Hastert of Illinois, said in an interview on CNN. He also said that "Congress, if we're going to get anything done, has to work with the president."

But before Congress can move on, there is one last impeachment issue to resolve: whether to censure Mr. Clinton, and here, too, longer-term political questions, as well as constitutional ones, are being calculated.

Most of the proponents of censure are Democrats who want to make a statement that their vote to acquit Mr. Clinton does not mean they condone his behavior.

"If he's acquitted, and I think he will be, there will be those who say that those of us who voted for acquittal exonerate his conduct," said Senator Richard Durbin, Democrat of Illinois, "and that's not true."

And so intent are they on censuring Mr. Clinton that some Democrats are threatening that they will keep trying to attach such a rebuke to pending legislation throughout the spring if Republicans do not agree to censure this week.

Senator Robert Torricelli, Democrat of New Jersey, who is the head of the Democrats' 2000 election effort, said this would hurt the Republicans. "It becomes very hard for them to explain why they were so incensed they wanted to remove the president from office and won't provide the others even a vote on a censure resolution," he said. "They are increasingly in a situation where they cannot extricate themselves or explain themselves."

Despite Mr. Torricelli's confidence, there are other Democrats and Republicans alike who believe Mr. Clinton's currently high job approval ratings may well fall once he no longer seems under threat of removal by Congress.

One senior Senate Republican staff member noted that in October 1991, during confirmation hearings, the American public believed Justice Clarence Thomas.

A year later, he said, the public had changed its mind and come to believe Anita Hill's account of sexual harassment.

So, a growing chorus of Republicans and conservatives are saying that their party should not join the censure effort and thus give Democrats an insurance policy in case public opinion changes.

CLINTON: President Looks Ahead to a New Agenda

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A political moderate, Mr. Jeffords became the first Republican to declare opposition to both articles.

Another Republican, Senator Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania, citing the laws of Scotland, said there could be "three possible verdicts: guilty, not guilty, not proved."

Mr. Specter said he would exercise his right to vote "not proved" to both articles, saying the House prosecutors' hands had been tied by Senate-imposed restrictions.

If Democrats vote as a bloc — and no more than one or two defections are expected, at most — that could prevent either article from gaining even a simple majority.

The 13 House "managers" have said they hope for at least one article to pass by a majority as vindication of their work.

"A failure to get 50 votes would be significant," said Senator Robert Torricelli, Democrat of New Jersey.

"Failure to get 50 votes undermines the credibility of the entire impeachment process."

The expected acquittal would remove the year-long peril to Mr. Clinton's presidency, if not the historic blot.

But Republicans, and some Democrats, will watch carefully for even the slightest sign of crowing or claim of vindication.

The president's reaction, Mr. Lockhart said, will be measured and grave, amounting to "relief and an anxiousness to continue doing the job that he's been doing."

"He understands the wrongful nature of his behavior," the spokesman said.

Mr. Lockhart told reporters that the president was "open to the idea of censure" but would not discuss details.

"I don't think it's appropriate for us to indicate or try to prescribe" punishment, he said.

Conservative Republicans, including Senator Phil Gramm of Texas, appear to have the clout to prevent censure from coming to the Senate floor, at least until after the weeklong recess. Such a delay, some senators say, would be tantamount to censure's death.

"The push for censure is losing steam," said

Senator Bill Frist, Republican of Tennessee.

But Mr. Jeffords and another moderate Republican, Senator Olympia Snowe of Maine, now support censure, after authors of a proposed measure added wording that urged future Congresses to honor the reprimand. The New York Times reported.

Some advocates fear that a censure could be rescinded by a future Congress, as happened in the case of President Andrew Jackson.

Mr. Clinton's expected statement is likely to include a new expression of contrition. The president was in western Virginia on Wednesday for a private meeting with House Democrats at an annual retreat.

Democrats, while exhausted by the yearlong Lewinsky drama, have watched with some amazement as their party has emerged strengthened, with growing public support, while Republicans have been so badly bruised that some analysts say they now risk losing control of Congress in 2000.

A new opinion survey by the Gallup Organization, for CNN and USA Today, found that 77 percent of Americans now believed that the Clinton presidency had been a success, as against only 20 percent who rated it a failure.

But many Americans have doubts about how well Democrats and Republicans, their relations sorely strained by the impeachment proceedings in the House and the trial in the Senate, will be able to work together in the two years remaining of Mr. Clinton's term.

Mr. Lockhart insisted that Clinton was ready to turn a page on impeachment as soon as the final votes were cast, and work with Republicans and Democrats on what he called "a very ambitious agenda."

Asked whether it was possible to rise above the impeachment-poisoned atmosphere, Mr. Lockhart replied:

"Well, I don't know that you can ever pretend that none of this ever happened."

He said, however, that Mr. Clinton had said repeatedly: "It's the people's business that comes first and in order to do the people's business, the president has to work with Democrats and Republicans in the House and in the Senate. He plans to do that."



Senator Trent Lott, the majority leader, waving on his way Wednesday to the deliberations on Mr. Clinton.

POLITICAL NOTES

Modest Tax Cut Proposed

WASHINGTON — Casting doubt on the viability of one of their party's main goals this year, a group of moderate House Republicans plans to reject calls for a sweeping income tax reduction and instead is building support for a more modest package of tax cuts, according to congressional aides.

The group of 11, led by Nancy Johnson of Connecticut, was to introduce a plan Wednesday that will scale back the so-called marriage penalty paid by many two-income couples, raise the amount of income that retirees can earn without losing Social Security benefits, and enact other changes that would cut taxes by \$100 billion over five years.

The plan is intended as an alternative to one being developed by John Kasich of Ohio, the

chairman of the Budget Committee, that would cut income tax rates by 10 percent. If fully enacted at once, such a cut would reduce revenues by around \$375 billion over five years.

The move is the first effort by Republican moderates to flex their muscle this year in the House. Republican leaders in both the House and Senate have been trying to rally the party around an income tax reduction at the top of their post-impeachment agenda. (NYT)

Clinton Thanks Caucus

WASHINGTON — In a closed-door session with House Democrats at their retreat in Wintergreen, Virginia, President Bill Clinton has expressed his gratitude to lawmakers in what apparently was an implicit thank you for their support on impeachment. (NYT)

Participants said that Mr. Clinton, who did not directly mention the impeachment issue, told the approximately 100 lawmakers that he wanted to help them win back the House next year.

He also said he was determined that Richard Gephardt of Missouri, the minority leader, would become the next speaker, and he praised Mr. Gephardt for deciding not to challenge Vice President Al Gore for the Democratic presidential nomination next year.

The enthusiastic welcome he received from House Democrats marked a departure from their often frosty relations in the past. House Democrats have long complained that the president was not particularly interested in working with them. Many of them also have groused that Mr. Clinton has worked more closely with Republicans on Capitol Hill. But impeachment led many of Mr. Clinton's old foes in the Democratic Party to rally behind him. (NYT)

Away From Politics

- More than eight feet of snow on the Sierra Nevada in four days closed Interstate 80 and triggered voluntary evacuations at parts of Lake Tahoe amid fear of avalanches. Several roads were shut because of vehicle spinouts and near-blizzard conditions. Hundreds of workers were sent home early in Reno, Carson City and other cities. (AP)
- College fraternities must start accepting women members, Dartmouth College has decided. President James Wright said the decision to have the fraternities go coed — and the school's sororities, too — is intended to encourage "respectful relations between women and men" and is part of an overhaul of life at the New Hampshire Ivy League school. (AP)
- The leading weight-loss programs in the United States have voluntarily agreed to disclose information to consumers about the costs and risks associated with their diet plans. Under the guidelines, the companies will warn customers that weight loss after the first two or three weeks of dieting should not exceed three pounds (one and a half kilograms) a week. (NYT)

FBI Assisted Chile in '70s, Documents Show

By Tim Weiner
New York Times Service

WASHINGTON — The FBI tried to track suspected associates of Chilean leftists in the United States in the 1970s on behalf of the government of General Augusto Pinochet, newly declassified documents show.

The FBI sent agents in New York and Dallas to search for two people whose names had been found in the address book of a courier for an underground Marxist group in Chile, according to the documents.

The courier was arrested in Paraguay in 1975, and Paraguayan police passed on the information to U.S. officials, the records show.

"The FBI initiated an investigation in the United States of the aforementioned people and addresses," the FBI's legal attaché in Buenos Aires wrote to a Chilean official in June 1975. "I will inform you of the results of the investigation as soon as I have them in hand."

Nothing came of the FBI investigations detailed in the documents. The bureau could not find the people and closed the case. Their nationalities and whereabouts are unknown.

Still, the records show that the FBI worked in liaison with the Pinochet government during the mid-1970s, when thousands of Chilean leftists were rounded up and killed.

Mr. Pinochet, now 83 and in London, is awaiting a ruling by Britain's highest court

on whether he may be extradited on a Spanish judge's warrant to face charges of crimes against humanity committed during his rule from 1973 to 1990.

FBI officials who spoke on condition of anonymity said the documents showed a routine form of cooperation that had long existed between

the bureau and many foreign law-enforcement services.

The arrested Chilean whose address book was seized in Paraguay, Jorge Isaac Fuentes, was sent back to Chile, where he disappeared in a prison, according to Chilean records.

Documents on the Fuentes case were made available by

the FBI at the request of The New York Times.

On Dec. 1, U.S. government officials said they would declassify records of Washington's relations with the Pinochet government, and the Spanish authorities pursuing Pinochet are keenly interested in seeing those documents.

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Reno Sets A Plan to Investigate Starr Team

By David Johnston
and Don Van Natta Jr.
New York Times Service

WASHINGTON — The Justice Department has decided to begin an inquiry to determine whether Kenneth Starr's prosecutors misled Attorney General Janet Reno about possible conflicts of interest when they obtained permission to investigate the Lewinsky matter in January 1998, according to government officials.

Among other concerns, the inquiry will focus on whether the prosecutors were truthful when they asserted that there had been no contacts between Mr. Starr's office and the Paula Jones legal team in the weeks leading up to Mr. Starr's decision to ask Ms. Reno to expand his inquiry beyond the Whitewater matter, said the officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

In recent months, documentation has emerged that indicates there were conversations between a prosecutor in Mr. Starr's office and a lawyer working behind the scenes with the Jones legal team from November 1997 to January 1998.

But a series of newly disclosed notes taken at the initial meetings on Jan. 15 and Jan. 16, 1998, between Mr. Starr's prosecutors and Justice Department officials, show that the prosecutors flatly asserted that there had been no contacts with the Jones team.

For example, Eric Holder Jr., the deputy attorney general, wrote in his three pages of notes of a Jan. 15, 1998, meeting with Mr. Starr's prosecutors: "They've had no contact with plaintiff's attys."

Handwritten notes by two other Justice Department officials, Monty Wilkinson and Josh Hochberg, corroborate the statements attributed to Mr. Starr's prosecutors.

Moreover, notes taken by another participant in the meeting, Steven Bates, a prosecutor in Mr. Starr's office, indicate that Jackie Bennett, one of Mr. Starr's deputies, told the Justice Department officials: "We've had no contact with the plaintiff's attorneys. We're concerned about appearances."

The notes have become crucial evidence in the Justice Department inquiry, which will be conducted by the Office of Professional Responsibility, which investigates prosecutorial misconduct. The lawyers' notes became public just last month as part of the Senate record of documents related to the impeachment trial of the president.

The truthfulness of Mr. Starr's prosecutors is one of several issues that the department wants to examine, the government officials said.

Lawyers in the ethics office also intend to investigate whether Mr. Starr abused his authority to convene grand juries or improperly pressured witnesses, like Monica Lewinsky, and disclosed secret grand jury information to the news media, the officials said.



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ASIA/PACIFIC

Tung Orders Justice Official To Beijing to Calm Dispute

HONG KONG — The chief executive of Hong Kong, Tung Chee-hwa, said Wednesday that he would send his justice secretary to Beijing to help cool a simmering constitutional dispute with the mainland over a Hong Kong court's immigration ruling.

"In the past few days," Mr. Tung said at a news conference, "I have kept in touch with the central authorities and have arranged for the secretary of justice to visit Beijing as my representative to communicate further with relevant departments of the central authorities."

Mr. Tung is sending Elsie Leung, the justice secretary, amid controversy over a Jan. 29 immigration ruling by the region's Court of Final Appeal that opened the door to tens of thousands of mainlanders and is threatening the first constitutional crisis since Britain handed Hong Kong back to China in July 1997.

The ruling bestows the right to live in the region on illegitimate children of Hong Kong residents and on children born before either parent became a Hong Kong resident.

Some mainland experts and a top Chinese cabinet official have criticized the ruling, charging that it contravened the Basic Law, Hong Kong's post-colonial constitution.

They also said it challenged decisions by the National People's Congress, the Chinese Parliament, which had barred such children from Hong Kong residence.

Beijing backed off Tuesday, saying it would continue to abide by the "one country, two systems" principle under which Hong Kong is promised a high level of autonomy and judicial independence for 50 years.

Miss Leung is widely expected to explain to mainland authorities the intricacies of the court ruling and to discuss other matters of legal jurisdiction in her forthcoming Beijing visit.

"They are not simple issues," Mr. Tung said.

"It may take a bit of time for all the complex issues to be resolved. But I have every confidence that they will be resolved."

Anwar's Judge Restricts Media

KUALA LUMPUR — The judge in the criminal trial of the former deputy prime minister of Malaysia, Anwar Ibrahim, ordered news media Wednesday not to report court testimony by Mr. Anwar about the prime minister and the former police chief.

Judge Augustine Paul, delivering the second blow to Mr. Anwar in as many days, said testimony that he had given earlier in the day about Prime Minister Mahathir bin Mohamad and former Inspector-General of Police Abdul Rahim Noor was inadmissible.

Judge Augustine also barred news media from reporting Mr. Anwar's statements about the two men. "I will instruct the press not to publish all this unless it is proven," he told the court.

On Wednesday, his third day of testimony in his corruption trial, Mr. Anwar spoke at length about conversations he had had with Mr. Mahathir and the former police chief before he was dismissed and arrested.

It was the second time during the three-month-old trial that the judge had ordered news media to withhold publication of testimony given in court.

In December, he instructed the media not to print excerpts of an audio tape recording, which a defense lawyer said proved a conspiracy to oust Mr. Anwar, dismissed and arrested in September, sparking anti-government protests.

Mr. Anwar has pleaded not guilty to 10 counts of sodomy and corruption and has said he was the victim of a conspiracy by associates of Mr. Mahathir.

TIMOR: Resistance Leader Out of Prison

Continued from Page 1

halt to fighting in his homeland and asked all sides to be patient while he began seeking a solution to the dispute. "I feel that I have been given a very heavy task, and I have to do it. That's why I am here," he said. "I feel that with talks with East Timorese from all sides, I can create an East Timorese nation."

"In my opinion, the priority now in solving the problems of East Timor is to create a peaceful climate," he said. He said all sides in the conflict should "reduce their enmity or hostility" to make his job easier.

Justice Minister Muliadi of Indonesia, who was at the house to greet Mr. Gusmao when he arrived, said, "Xanana is here not only to sit, but also to work, to help solve the problem of East Timor."

Talks in New York this week between the Indonesian and Portuguese foreign ministers, Ali Alatas and Jaime Gama, produced the broad outlines of an agreement, but the two sides still differ over a key point: Portugal insists on a referendum to decide East Timor's fate, while Indonesia wants to find an alternative method of "consultation" to gauge local sentiment.

Jakarta officials say they fear that a referendum on Timor could be costly, hard to organize and might touch off fighting among rival Timorese factions.

For the many East Timorese who have been fighting the independence struggle, Mr. Gusmao's move to house arrest was



Police arresting a mainland protester seeking residence rights at the Hong Kong government offices Wednesday.

CHINA: Taiwan Reports a New Deployment of Missiles by Beijing

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hignous defense ties with Taipei would be seen in Beijing as an attack on Chinese interests.

In 1996, the United States and China engaged in a tense standoff over Taiwan when China conducted missile tests near the island and the U.S. government dispatched two aircraft-carrier battle groups to the region.

The Taiwan Relations Act calls on the U.S. government to sell Taiwan enough weapons to defend itself, but it is vague on whether U.S. troops would defend the island.

Chinese security analysts view missile defense as a "force multiplier" — something that would deny them their main tactical advantage over Taiwan's army. China has a substantial missile threat; Taiwan has little means now to counter it.

Randall Schriver, former senior country director for China in the office of the secretary of defense, said Beijing was also concerned that including the island of 21 million people under the umbrella would embolden Taiwan's fledgling independence movement and further postpone unification between China and Taiwan.

Finally, U.S. proposals to include South Korea and Japan under the umbrella, which have gone much further than talk about Taiwan, are also bothering Beijing. These proposals were spurred by the firing of a North Korean missile on Aug. 31 that flew over Japan. The flight underscored dramatically that the 100,000 American troops in Asia are potential targets of North Korean missiles.

U.S. officials said they had conducted talks in the last six months with Japan and South Korea about establishing an anti-missile defense umbrella over these countries but declined to provide more specific details about whether the program would be land-based or sea-based. They have also raised the possibility with Japan that it might help pay for some of the research, the officials said.

Chinese analysts have written in recent weeks that they fear the United States is using the furor caused by Pyongyang's missile test as an excuse to expand its security agreements with South Korea and Japan into an anti-Communist bloc. For the first time in more than a year, these analysts are voicing concern that the United States is trying to contain China.

On Jan. 12, Sha Zukang, director general of the Foreign Ministry's arms control and disarmament division, warned in Washington that an American decision to go forward with the missile defense program would touch off a new arms race.

It would force other countries to develop "more advanced missiles," Mr. Sha warned. "This will be in nobody's interests," he said. "We wish the United States was taking a more cautious and responsible attitude."

Some Western analysts and officials say they worry that China might react to this perceived alliance by adopting a more aggressive stance in Asia, particularly toward Taiwan.

In recent months, Beijing has restarted a drive to extend its reach in the South China Sea, building up what it has called a fishing facility on Mischief Reef — in waters claimed by the Philippines.

It also has launched military exercises opposite Taiwan, albeit much smaller than a massive missile-firing drill in March 1996 that prompted the United States to send the two naval battle groups near the Taiwan Strait.

In a statement Wednesday, Taiwan's Defense Ministry said, "The threat of the Chinese Communists' guided missile tests has an impact not only on the military front but also on the political, economic and psychological fronts."

At the heart of the problem, Western and Chinese analysts say, is a yawning gap between U.S. interests in Asia, elucidated last November in a Pentagon report, and Chinese interests, set out in China's first defense white paper issued last year.

Simply put, the Pentagon argues that the American network of security arrangements and treaties is the region's bedrock of stability.

The missile defense system would strengthen these alliances, Pentagon officials say, and it would also go a long way

to ensure that U.S. troops would be stationed in Asia for many years to come.

The Chinese call these alliances, stretching from Australia to Japan, "relics of the Cold War" and say they will destabilize the region. They ultimately want U.S. troops out of Asia as part of China's goal to become the major regional power in Asia.

Talk of U.S. missile defense plans and the reports of the new missile deployments in southern China also come as relations with China are entering what U.S. officials acknowledge could be a difficult period. The honeymoon, occasioned by summits between Presidents Bill Clinton and Jiang Zemin in 1997 and 1998, is over, they say.

China has denounced U.S. demands that North Korea allow a team of American experts to visit an underground site at Kunming, where U.S. officials worry the North Koreans are carrying out a nuclear weapons program.

A broad array of Western analysts and officials say China has itself blame for the renewed urgency about theater missile defense in Asia.

China, they charge, has not used its influence on North Korea to slow its race to develop longer-range missiles with improved accuracy.

Albright Will Tour Asia Amid Concern on China

Compiled by Our Staff From Dispatches

WASHINGTON — Secretary of State Madeleine Albright will travel to China, Thailand and Indonesia in March amid growing concern in Washington that Chinese-U.S. ties are again headed in the wrong direction.

"The purpose of the secretary's trip is to affirm continued U.S. strategic commitments to Asia and take up specific regional and bilateral concerns, the Asian financial crisis and progress toward free, fair and credible elections in Indonesia," said the State Department spokesman, James Rubin.

Another official said that her trip was also intended to complete an Asian trip that she was forced to cut short in early November, skipping planned visits to Bangkok and Jakarta because of escalating tensions with Iraq.

After leaving Washington on Feb. 28, Mrs. Albright will travel to Beijing for meetings with senior Chinese officials the first two days of March.

Her focus is "our expanding strategic dialogue with China and to facilitate progress on a range of bilateral issues," Mr. Rubin said.

On March 3, Mrs. Albright will travel to Thailand.

On the following day, Mr. Rubin said, "she will be in Indonesia to provide her an opportunity to explore with the government and opposition leaders key developments, including preparations for national elections scheduled for this June, the future of East Timor and strengthening prospects for early economic recovery."

No major initiatives are expected during this tour, which analysts in Washington regard as largely aimed at preparing for Prime Minister Zhu Rongji's first official visit to the United States, possibly in April.

"Both sides are rather nervous about the whole relationship is losing air speed and altitude pretty quickly," commented Robert Manning, who is Asia director at the nonpartisan Council on Foreign Relations.

Mr. Zhu's visit could come at an awkward time, just weeks after the State Department has issued its annual human rights review and Congress has declassified much of a report on China's alleged 20-year campaign to gain illegal access to sensitive U.S. military technology.

The human rights review will likely

contain sharp criticism of Beijing for a stepped-up campaign against political dissent, as the country struggles to keep a lid on discontent spurred by rising unemployment.

The congressional report on U.S. technology transfers to China could also complicate relations between the world's largest economy and the most populous country.

Representative Douglas Bereuter, a moderate Republican on the House panel looking into China's high-tech acquisitions, said Tuesday that the committee had found "grave and extraordinarily damaging losses to American national security by Chinese espionage because of lax security measures."

Once the report is released, "I think it will create differences," said Mr. Bereuter, who is from Nebraska. He stressed that it could be "a very serious bump."

The Pentagon is expected to make public soon two reports to Congress that also could cause concern in Beijing. One is on prospects for developing a theater-missile defense in Asia, and the other is on the military balance between China and Taiwan.

Washington and Beijing are also at odds over their rising trade imbalance and when China will join the World Trade Organization, which requires broad market liberalization as a condition of membership.

Renewed animosity to chronic differences undermines the revived bilateral goodwill that was the main achievement of President Bill Clinton's visit to China last summer, according to some analysts here.

(AP, Reuters)

BRIEFLY

Burma Regrets Boycott of Talks

BANGKOK — The Burmese government expressed regret Wednesday that the United States and Britain would not be sending representatives to an international conference on the heroin trade to be held in Rangoon at the end of the month.

A Burmese news release said the two Western nations "bear a special responsibility to work with the rest of the international community" because as major heroin markets they fuel the international drug trade.

Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark and Italy have also reportedly decided to boycott the conference.

Washington has been sharply critical of Burma's military government. It has applied a broad range of sanctions, including limits on official contacts, to show disapproval of the regime's human-rights record and its failure to turn over power to an elected government.

(AP)

Strike Toll Rises In Bangladesh

DHAKA, Bangladesh — Two people were killed and more than 100 injured in clashes in Bangladesh on Wednesday, the second day of an opposition-led strike.

Wednesday's violence brought the number of deaths in two days to three and injuries to about 200 and prompted warnings from diplomats that Bangladesh was nearing political chaos.

One of the dead, a student described as a government supporter, was shot and killed by political rivals at Feni, southeast of Dhaka.

Three major opposition parties began the strike Tuesday seeking to topple the nation's top elections official. They accuse him of pro-government bias and demand that he quit before municipal elections Feb. 23-25.

(Reuters)

Hun Sen Builds Ties With Beijing

BEIJING — Cambodia's prime minister, Hun Sen, met Wednesday with President Jiang Zemin of China and said that high-level contacts between China and Cambodia had helped push ties to "a new high," state media reported.

Mr. Hun Sen's meeting with Mr. Jiang followed talks Tuesday with Prime Minister Zhu Rongji and the signing of five agreements, including an extradition pact. The other agreements covered Chinese loans to Cambodia and cooperation in economics, technology, tourism and culture, the China Daily newspaper reported.

Media reports did not say whether the talks had touched on international efforts to prosecute Cambodian Khmer Rouge leaders.

(AP)

Prosecution Rests In Singapore Case

SINGAPORE — The prosecution completed its case Wednesday against two opposition politicians accused of holding a public speech without a permit in a trial challenging Singapore's restrictions on civil liberties.

But the leaders of the small Singapore Democratic Party, which has 60 members in Parliament, said they would testify to challenge a law they consider an unconstitutional restriction on free speech. The case was adjourned until Feb. 22. (AP)



ROOFTOP INFERNO — Firefighters dousing flames Wednesday after a helicopter lowering an air conditioner crashed on the top of a Cape Town building. Four people on board were killed in the accident.

AT HOME: No Rocking Chairs as American Retirees Hit the Road

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campgrounds for seniors living behind the wheel.

The rise of early retirement, medical advances helping the elderly live healthier longer and new rigs as comfortable as Florida condos are making the lifestyle an easier choice.

"It really is becoming a way of life for more of them," said Diane Harlan, who edits the *Escapees'* national magazine. "They're retiring with more vitality and need something in place of work. And this is so different."

Many are selling their homes, storing their belongings, cashing in their nest eggs and kissing their old lives goodbye. In Land Yachts and Winnebagos, in ramshackle houses and old trailers pulled by even older pickups, they ramble across vast Western deserts in the winter

and roam lush forests in the Pacific Northwest in the summer. Then they turn the wheels of their RVs and do it all over again.

They call it "hitch itch." "Now what?" So we took off.

"I never thought I had the nerve to do this," Mrs. Webb said one morning in the desert here as she practiced painting on canvas. "But our kids had grown up and we were in an empty house saying, 'Now what? So we took off.'"

Some rattle off their favored destinations in a kind of spiritual chant: Agave, Yuma, Quartzsite, Mammoth Lakes. In those spots and others, there are RV camps that require reservations and limit stays. There are camps that charge fees and post rules. And for the true believers and free spirits, the geiatric gypsies who want a taste of the West where it's still wild, there is Slab City.

It sits nearly on top of the San Andreas Fault. It is not a city at all, just an abandoned military base on 640 desolate acres (260 hectares) of desert in the southeast corner of California. It is miles from the nearest speck of a town, Niland (population 1,042). Troops trained here for battle during World War II, but out a scrap from the base is left, only the cement slabs on which it once stood. Hence, the name.

The military still drops bombs at a test site a few miles away. Years ago, a couple of footloose Slabbers, as old folks here are called, sneaked on to that restricted range hunting for scrap metal and came back without all their limbs. Others climb atop their rigs some nights and watch tracer fire streak across the coal-black desert sky. Some explosions are close enough to shake and rattle the camp.

"People almost get their false teeth knocked out sometimes," said Phil Koursh, 75, who has been driving his camper here for 13 years after a career remodeling kitchens. "This is not the Riviera."

There are no fees or rules at Slab City, no running water or electricity, just hundreds of humble trailers and campers scattered in every direction. The place empties in the summer because temperatures make it a furnace. This time of year, it is packed with about 5,000 people.

Most are on their own and in their sixties and seventies. They stop in for a few weeks or months, reunite with pilgrims they have met from their travels, then move on. Some carve out turf at Slab City by slashing old tires in half and lining them in the dirt around their rigs.

It does not draw the country club set. Most roadsters here are retired factory workers, war vets or tradesmen, usually living on fixed incomes. They have few expenses: gas, food, medicine and more gas.

Many are restless widows and widowers searching for full lives without their spouses. They all preach the glory of the road, yet some voices also betray sadness and loss.

"I guess I needed something to take the place of my married life when my wife passed," said Irv Himelberger, 85, a former carpenter from Washington state who travels with a mutt he named Freddy.

"I didn't want to sit around looking at the walls or have to start depending on my kids, either."

Still, the road and the camps eventually wear some of them out. Some return home after a few years or begin living with their children. Others join traditional retirement communities.

"It is tempting to go back sometimes," said Irma Ruth, whose teenage grandchildren keep up with her on the Internet home page they made her create on her computer.

"This life," added Josi Roth, "is definitely not for everyone."



A pair of Louers on Wheels hugging as morning coffee is served on a California campsite. More and more American seniors are hitting the roads.

07/21/2015

Will Tour Asia cern on China

contain sharp criticism of Beijing's stepped-up campaign against political dissent, as the country struggles to a tide on discontent spurred by unemployment.

The congressional report on technology transfers to China could complicate relations between the world's largest economy and the populous country.

Representative Douglas Berman, moderate Republican on the House of Representatives, said Tuesday that the report had found "grave and continuing damage to American national security by Chinese espionage because of lax security measures."

Once the report is released, "the report, who is from Nebraska, He said that it could be "a very serious issue."

The Pentagon is expected to release two reports to Congress, one on prospects for developing a missile defense in Asia, and the other on the military balance between China and Taiwan.

Washington and Beijing are at odds over their rising trade imbalance and when China will join the World Trade Organization, which is a condition of membership.

Renewed attention to chronic issues undermines the revived goodwill that was the main theme of President Bill Clinton's visit last summer, according to some analysts.

BRIEFLY

Burma Regrets Boycott of Talks

BANGKOK The Burmese government expressed regret Tuesday that the United States-Burma Organization, which represents to an international conference on the heroin trade held in Rangoon at the end of the month.

A Burmese news release said two Western nations "bear responsibility to work with the international community to cause as many heroin markets as possible to close."

Belgium, the Netherlands, and Italy have also agreed to boycott the conference.

Washington has been skeptical of Burma's military government. It has applied a broad range of sanctions, including limits on official contacts, to show disapproval of the regime's human rights and its failure to turn over power to an elected government.

Strike Toll Rises In Bangladesh

DHAKA Bangladesh — 14 people were killed and more than 100 injured in clashes in the capital Wednesday, the second day of an opposition-led strike.

Wednesday's violence led to the number of deaths in more than three and injuries to about 200, prompted warnings from diplomats that Bangladesh was nearing political chaos.

One of the dead, a student, was shot and killed by police in the southeast of Dhaka.

Three major opposition parties began the strike Tuesday seeking to topple the nation's top election official. They accuse him of pro-government bias and demand his ouster before municipal elections on Feb. 25.

Hun Sen Builds Ties With Beijing

BEIJING Cambodia's prime minister, Hun Sen, met Wednesday with President Jiang Zemin, who said that high-level contacts between China and Cambodia had helped push ties to a "high" state media reported.

Mr. Hun Sen's meeting with Jiang followed talks Tuesday with Prime Minister Zhu Rongji and signing of five agreements on trade, investment, and cooperation in Cambodia and economic, technology, and culture, the China Daily newspaper reported.

Media reports did not mention the talks had touched on national efforts to prosecute the Khmer Rouge leaders.

Prosecution Ready In Singapore Case

SINGAPORE The prosecution has completed its case Wednesday against two opposition leaders accused of holding a public meeting without a permit in a bid to challenge Singapore's constitution.

But the leaders of the Singapore Democratic Party have no intention of pleading guilty, they would resist any conviction and they consider an appeal.

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CONVENTIONAL COMPONENTS SUCH AS STEERING AND BRAKING / COLLISION AVOIDANCE /

RADAR TECHNOLOGY THAT WILL SCAN TO THE FRONT, SIDE AND REAR OF A VEHICLE TO IDENTIFY

OBJECTS IN YOUR PATH / EMERGENCY ENERGY SYSTEMS — A WHOLE NEW WAY TO HELP PROPEL

VEHICLES IN THE 21ST CENTURY / ADVANCED SAFETY INTERFACES — A SYSTEM THAT WILL

SENSE IF A SEAT IS OCCUPIED, THE SIZE OF THE OCCUPANT, HOW FAST THEY ARE MOVING

AND THEN, IN MILLISECONDS, DETERMINE THE SEVERITY OF A CRASH AND

TO DEPLOY / ADVANCED ENGINE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS — THROUGH THE USE OF

ONE SYSTEM WILL INTERFACE WITH ANOTHER TO PRECISELY CONTROL AND

OPTIMUM PERFORMANCE / INDUSTRY MILESTONES: THE FIRST SELF-ALIGNING

HELPS REDUCE THE POSSIBILITY OF HEAD INJURIES IN A COLLISION / INVISIA

INTEGRATION OF AN AIRBAG INTO A STEERING WHEEL FOR AESTHETIC DESIGN / MAJOR TECHNOLOGIES ON THE

FIRST MODERN-DAY PRODUCTION ELECTRIC VEHICLE / ABS — THE FIRST AUTOMATIC BRAKING SYSTEM TO HELP

MAINTAIN STEERING CONTROL AND HELP PREVENT SKIDDING WHEN BRAKING ON MOST SLIPPERY SURFACES /

MAGNASTEER™ — THE FIRST MAGNETIC SPEED-DEPENDENT STEERING SYSTEM THAT REDUCES STEERING EFFORT

AT LOW SPEEDS AND PROVIDES GREATER ROAD FEEL AT HIGH SPEEDS / THE FIRST CATALYTIC CONVERTER

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THE SEVERITY OF INJURIES IN FRONT-END COLLISIONS / PASS-KEY® — THE FIRST VEHICLE ANTIFTHEFT SYSTEM

THAT REQUIRES A SPECIFIC KEY TO START A SPECIFIC VEHICLE / THE FIRST SIDE-CHAND BODY

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TO HE

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FOUR-

SEEKING

REDUCE THE SEVERITY OF INJURIES IN SIDE IMPACTS / THE FIRST ENERGY-Absorbing

TO HELP REDUCE THE POTENTIAL DANGER TO A DRIVER IN A FRONT-END ACCIDENT

RESTRAINT SYSTEM TO HELP PROTECT SMALLER PASSENGERS IN THE EVENT OF AN ACCIDENT

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Victoria's Secret Reaps a Media Bonanza

By Lisa Napoli
New York Times Service

NEW YORK — If a fashion show is shown live on the Internet and most people who try to see it cannot, does it still make a splash? You bet.

The flaunting of the Victoria's Secret spring collection, shown in New York on Feb. 3 and simulcast online, is a new media case study.

The lingerie company, a unit of Intimate Brands Inc., spent \$1.5 million on a single 30-second television spot during the Super Bowl and \$4 million afterward to advertise the fashion show in newspapers internationally, yielding a bonanza of ink, video, bits and water-cooler chat worth exponentially more.

But after the show, some press reports focused on the fact that some would-be viewers had been closed out of the World Wide Web site (www.victoriassecret.com) during the live show. There was also much ado about the sputtering audio and video received by the 2 million people who did establish contact.

Critics chided Victoria's Secret and Broadcast.com, the company that delivered the event over the Internet, for not being prepared for the flood of visitors.

They wrote the whole thing off as one giant publicity stunt. No kidding! Publicity is exactly what Victoria's Secret wanted. And it got the last laugh, orchestrating what might go down in the text-books as shrewd multimedia manipulation. In addition to the millions that turned up the day of the fashion show, the company reported that 1 million people logged onto its Web site in the hours after the Super Bowl promotional spot.

THAT WOULD seem to be an example of the cross-media convergence that industry pundits have been breathlessly promoting as a benefit of the Web but which has actually happened only a few times. Few advertisers using any other combination of media and subject matter could hope to achieve the reach that Victoria's Secret did.

"It's no longer about advertising per se or marketing per se, but about branding and using all this multidimensional media," said Allan Morris, publisher of The Informationist, a beauty-industry newsletter. "Fashion isn't Paris anymore, and it ain't New York, and it's not Victoria's Secret's 800 stores. Now, every household that has an Internet connection is a fashion store."

The Super Bowl spot, the newspaper ads and the Web site were the work of Resource Marketing, an agency in Columbus, Ohio, with an estimated \$75 million a year in revenue. Its other clients include Cisco Systems Inc., Hewlett-Packard Co. and Netscape Communications Corp.

While those in marketing looked at the Victoria's Secret play with awe and envy, people more interested in the Internet's infrastructure expressed

frustration over this latest example of the continued shortcomings of the Web as a mass medium. Every time a Web event draws huge crowds, some piece of technology fails, leaving a number of would-be viewers in the dark and giving the naysayers grounds to declare that the medium is not ready for prime time.

Another Super Bowl advertiser, HotJobs.com, was unprepared to accommodate the onslaught of visitors drawn to its job-hunters' site after seeing its commercial. The company spent half of its annual revenue on the spot, the first time it has advertised during the Super Bowl.

And in another recent football-related example of convergence gone awry, the ABC television network canceled promotions for a Web site offering player biographies and statistics and an on-line play-along game during the Fiesta Bowl game on Jan. 4 after the site reached 100,000 users just minutes into the broadcast. Executives at ABC, a unit of Walt Disney Co., later acknowledged that they had no idea the offering would prove so popular.

Even those who did manage to log on to the Victoria's Secret show did not see anything near the video quality of the glistering, full-motion advertisement shown during the Super Bowl.

Dave Dadekian, a digital-video consultant in New York, called the Victoria's Secret show a "diservice" to Webcasting. No Web organization, Mr. Dadekian said, could handle the number of people that had been lured to the show. He also criticized its production values.

"You can't put dark pictures, a couple of spotlights, a far-away camera on the Web; it may look great for television, but you can't do that for streaming video," he said, referring to live video on the Internet.

SUCH FRETTING may miss the point. The Internet doesn't have an endless capacity to accommodate every viewer, as television does. But aside from the occasional traffic jam, the Internet can give viewers what they are looking for when they want it.

Now that the initial clut of rubemockers is gone, shoppers — and gawkers — can see the show at the site any time. Victoria's Secret was able to reach customers in countries where the company doesn't have stores or doesn't distribute the 350 million catalogs that it mails annually.

Another value of the Web, according to the company, is that men seem more willing to buy on-line than in its stores.

"The goal is not to mimic television," said Mark Cuban, president of Broadcast.com. "If you wanted to buy television, you would just buy television."

"We weren't trying for perfection. We were just trying to help Victoria's Secret reach their goals. This is very much a perception and momentum business, and all of a sudden they're the talk of the industry."

Joysticks Help Game Players Feel 'the Force'

By Joe Hutsko
New York Times Service

NEW YORK — You're flying a World War II prop fighter. An enemy plane floats across your sights. You squeeze the trigger on your joystick, and it rai-tats vigorously in your grip. An instant later, a weighty hinge nearly rips the joystick right out of your hand. It's enemy fire, from behind. Your engine sputters. Nose takes a dive. A fast free fall with no sensation at all, then one final shudder from the stick when plane meets ground.

That scene could be played out with any number of video games, but players who take their fun seriously are no longer content with better-looking on-screen cockpits and dashboards. They want a more realistic "feel" from a new crop of add-on gaming devices with a feature known as force feedback, which makes the device react and respond in the player's hands to what is happening on-screen.

"People have taken an interest in realism, which has driven technology forward," said Mark Szabo, editor in chief of Force One, a Web site dedicated to force feedback. (www.force-1.com). "Game developers have finally started to take advantage of the hardware."

While force-feedback joysticks have been around for a couple of years, the latest devices promise more realistic responses, better designs and, most important, better support for the kinds of games that take advantage of them: flying and driving games.

The force-feedback effects are created by high-torque motors that respond to instructions from game programs.

Hit a bump in the road or fire a machine gun, and the device responds accordingly, with a weighty jolt in the steering wheel or a staccato vibration of the joystick.

It is not quite like being there, but as feedback effects edge closer to imitating the real thing, enthusiastic gamers are willing to shell out cash to get their hands on the goods. The new devices cost from \$100 to \$250.

The first mass-market consumer force-feedback joystick was the Force FX, introduced in November 1996 by CH Products. It uses a technology called I-Force, created by Immersion Corp.

Immersion was inspired by the specialized force-feedback devices used in training military personnel and in steering robotic hands that handle radioactive core reactor rods in nuclear power plants.

Several manufacturers have licensed I-Force technology for their products. But not Microsoft Corp.,



A game display on Force One, a Web site dedicated to the hands-on feel of force feedback.

The new generation of add-on devices has a feature called force feedback, designed to give game players a jolting good time.

maker of the popular Flight Simulator game: It wanted a force-feedback technology to call its own and found it at a design company called Exos, absorbing its people and technology into its ever-growing hardware division.

THE DEVICES vary in price, aesthetic design, special features and the way they connect to the computer.

Microsoft's Sidewinder Force Feedback Pro has an angular, split-level design that is lighter and takes less space than Logitech's smooth and curvy Wingman Force. The Sidewinder, which in its second generation has lost the noisy cooling fan that game players had complained about, connects to a computer's game-controller port. The Wingman connects to either a serial or Universal Serial Bus port. USB ports offer the potential for more responsive feedback because they operate at higher speeds than serial or game controller ports.

But the most significant difference is what is inside the devices. The Microsoft products use gears to activate and agitate themselves. Skipping gears alto-

gether, the Logitech Wingman Force uses a series of cables to tug its stick to and fro.

Players on several Internet newsgroups and Web sites dedicated to computer games report that feedback effects produced with the cable-based stick feel more lifelike and less harsh.

Competitive advantages and arguments aside, is force feedback a geeky gimmick, or does it give game players more than just throbbing, sweaty palms?

"There are many games out there where force feedback improves player performance by providing physical cues as to what's happening in the virtual world," Mr. Szabo said. He cited, for instance, "the feeling when the tires are breaking loose" in a racing game. "This indicates how close to the edge of the envelope they're pushing the virtual race car."

THE LATEST application of force feedback is finding its way to the computer mouse. Dubbed FeelIt technology by Immersion, the device will respond in a tactile manner to on-screen clicks and drags.

This is interesting to the players of first-person three-dimensional shooting games such as Quake and Half-Life, whose preferred method of play often is a combination of keyboard and mouse. A force-feedback mouse could be used to convey the rumble of firing a cannon or the agony of being hit by enemy fire or falling from a high terrace to a hard dungeon floor.

In the console video-game world, Nintendo made news in 1997 when it introduced the Rumble Pak, a small cartridge that snaps into the Nintendo 64 controller. The cartridge, which operates on two AA batteries, houses a small motor that responds to on-screen action cues.

Sony has since come out with a controller for the PlayStation that does not use batteries.

Both represent force feedback at its most limited. But Shigeru Miyamoto, the Nintendo game designer who invented Super Mario, hopes his latest best-selling game changes that impression.

"For the first time, a video-game accessory will work on a proactive basis, shaking to clue players into action, as well as on a reactive basis, shaking in response to something that has already happened," Mr. Miyamoto said.

It's the golden fleece of feedback: the sensation that helps you win. But, of course, there is a catch.

"In order for the Rumble Pak to work at all," Mr. Miyamoto said, "players will need to search for and find an item that will enable it."

Nordic 'Anti-Amazon' Thrives by Keeping It Simple

By Bruno Giussani
New York Times Service

NEW YORK — When looking at successful Web retailers, it is common to argue that tailored offerings, specialized information and community-building features and tools are what make the difference between success and failure.

Consider Amazon.com, the best-known — despite being neither the cheapest nor the fastest — of the on-line booksellers. Amazon has been able to package in a compelling manner a vast amount of "content," including reviews

'The value of the company is in selling more music to more people, faster and cheaper.'

Now from Sweden comes an "anti-Amazon," a small company called Boxman that contradicts most of the current assumptions about Web retail. Boxman's credo: "Move away from content if you want to sell things."

Ola Ahlqvist, the company's vice president of international development, adopts almost evangelical tones when he talks about retailing on-line.

"Those who claim that the value of their company resides in the ability to mass-produce advice and information are wasting time," he said. "The value of the company is in selling more music to more people, faster and cheaper."

Started in Sweden in December 1997, Boxman began by offering — along with its tens of thousands of music titles — reviews by professional journalists, a music magazine, contests, a "demo box" where musicians could show off their talents free and other content. It has

now dropped most of it. "When we ask customers what they want, they don't answer 'community feeling' or 'shopping experience,'" Mr. Ahlqvist said. "They want more music samples, ease of use, speed and low prices. That's all that they care about."

And Boxman is giving them just that. Its home page is graphically poor — although it uses frames, a technology not everybody agrees on — but it is fast and intuitive, and the purchasing mechanism is simple. To make it even easier, customers are given the choice of paying with a credit card or receiving an invoice.

One possible reason customers go straight to the products, ignoring content or community features, is the high cost of Internet connections in most European countries. Boxman has been very effective in adapting to these get-off-line-quick users.

The company, whose goal is "to become the leading provider of home entertainment in video, books, computer games and toys," is partly owned by its management. Among the other shareholders are heavyweights such as Bonnier, one of the largest European publishing concerns.

The company's chairman is Jan Carlzon, a respected Swedish businessman who is known for having engineered in the 1980s a radical turnaround of the ailing Scandinavian Airline System.

In the second half of last year, Boxman launched operations in three other countries — Norway, Finland and Denmark — and now it employs 50 people.

The company does not disclose detailed revenue figures, but it says it owns 5 percent of the overall compact-disk market in the Scandinavian countries and is already turning a profit from its Swedish operation. It is now preparing to move into France, Germany, Britain and the Netherlands and is starting to plan for

an initial public offering this year.

The expansion strategy is based on localizing the brand and the operations, having local staff members answering queries in local languages — but with a difference.

"In every country we move in, we purchase the products locally, from the national distributor," said Bertrand Le

Fischer, the former managing director of AOL France, now in charge of setting up the French operations of Boxman. "We want to respect the structure of copyright and distribution and build good relations with the music industry," he said. For this reason, Boxman does not sell cross-border to customers and is careful to avoid parallel importing channels.

BRIEFLY

SURFING AS A COED SPORT: This year for the first time, the number of women using on-line services is likely to match the number of men on-line, according to a survey by International Data Group, a market research firm. Just four years ago, "it was pretty much a male Internet," Frank Gens, a senior vice president at the firm, said. But by late 1998, about 48 percent of the people on-line were women, he said. "As the Internet moves from being a curiosity to a tool that you can use to save time, it becomes more appealing, particularly to women who are stretched for time as they balance work and home," Mr. Gens said. (WT)

TECHNOLOGY INDEX

Technology stock indexes around the world:

	Tuesday close	Pct. change previous week	Pct. change year to date
North America			
Pacific Exchange Tech	465.93		+3.72
S&P Tech Composite	1,227.32		+5.06
Europe			
Morgan Stanley Eurotec	651.95		+6.79
Asia			
Topix Electric	1,563.75		1.38

Source: Morgan Stanley, Bloomberg News

For technology articles from the past week, see TribTech on the IHT's World Wide Web site at <http://www.ihl.com>. Articles include:

- Russia Urges U.S. to Help Fix Computers, Feb. 5
- Consumers Win a Game, Feb. 4
- On-Line Castle in Haiti's Cyber Desert, Feb. 4
- Microsoft Slips Up in Video Demonstration at Antitrust Trial, Feb. 4
- Europe Posts 23% Growth in PC Sales for '98, Feb. 4
- Internet Investing: How to Add Safety, Feb. 4
- Technology Stocks Lead the Market Lower, Feb. 5
- Nokia Chairman is Stepping Down, Feb. 5-7
- Boeing Abandons Supersonic Jetliner, Feb. 6
- On-Line Trading Hits Snags, Feb. 5
- Virtual Stores, Real Clout, Feb. 9
- Microsoft to Reorganize into 4 Units, Feb. 9

To reach TribTech editors or to comment on IHT tech coverage, send e-mail to tribtech@ihl.com. International Herald Tribune

CROSSWORD

ACROSS

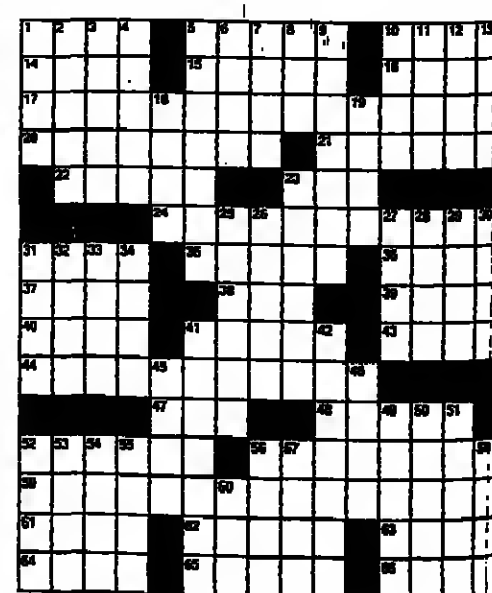
- Engrossed
- Poetry originally from Wales
- "I accuse" punner
- Limerick land
- To — (perfectly)
- Nephew of Abel
- Handle many deer carefully?
- Agnes and Cecil B.
- Go ballistic
- Blockheads
- Garfield's owner
- Critique singer Johnny?

DOWN

- With 43-Across, use bubble gum?
- Teens
- Cook in stacking
- Chinnet part
- Future fern
- Dolly and others
- Transfer hay?
- Prefix with knock
- Be superior
- Cooper
- Chinnet part
- Future fern
- Dolly and others

Solution to Puzzle of Feb. 10

HARES TADA SLAB
AGENT EDEN HELL
SINGEIDONTHAVEU
ALA ADDS ONICE
YELLEY LOOK
ASS BUMP OFF
ALAN AURAL REL
BINGINGSHABBLE
AMA NORTH ESTA
POTATOES OFE
LUKE FORTWO
EPSON BUILT FIVE
BATHESAUPTUOLE
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Amazon.com Takes
Full-Disclosure PledgeBy Doreen Carvajal
New York Times Service

NEW YORK — Faced with e-mail rebukes from its customers, the on-line retailer Amazon.com Inc. has revised its new advertising policy, pledging to disclose every time that book publishers pay to feature titles on its electronic bookstore.

The Seattle-based company said it was still figuring out the mechanics of this new policy but said it would take effect March 1. In the meantime, Amazon has expanded its book-return policy to demonstrate its faith in its recommendations, vowing to accept titles from dissatisfied customers no matter how dog-eared or worn they are, said Jeff Bezos, the company's chief executive and founder.

The New York Times reported Monday that Amazon had fashioned an "e-merchandising" program for book publishers that sought advertising dollars for featured treatment of titles in categories that range from "What We're Reading" to "Destined for Greatness."

Amazon did not disclose the advertising fees, which ranged from \$250 to \$12,500, to its customers. The bookseller contended that its sites were not for sale because editors screened and vetted books worthy of highlighting.

The change in policy signaled a recognition that Amazon — with its reviews, recommendations and friendly interaction with customers — is a hybrid, both bookseller and electronic adviser, somehow different from bookstore chains or supermarkets that commonly sell shelf space for products.

"We're always listening to our customers, and it was clear that our customers had a higher expectation for us than the physical bookselling world," said Bill Curry, a company spokesman.

IN GLOBAL C

Information systems are...
Management...
Supply chain...
Flexible solutions...
So what you need is...

INTERNATIONAL

New Plans
To Monitor
Iraq OfferedBy Judith Miller
New York Times Service

UNITED NATIONS, New York — The International Atomic Energy Agency has submitted plans for long-term monitoring of Iraq that call for "intrusive" inspections and assume that Baghdad might try again to produce nuclear weapons.

In a report to the Security Council on Monday, the agency director, Mohamed Barakat, said the monitoring would cost at least \$10 million a year. The report concludes once again that Iraq is denying the agency documents and material it has requested, including, for instance, documentary evidence that Iraq has abandoned its nuclear weapons program. And the agency said it could not verify that Iraq had not hidden banned nuclear equipment or materials.

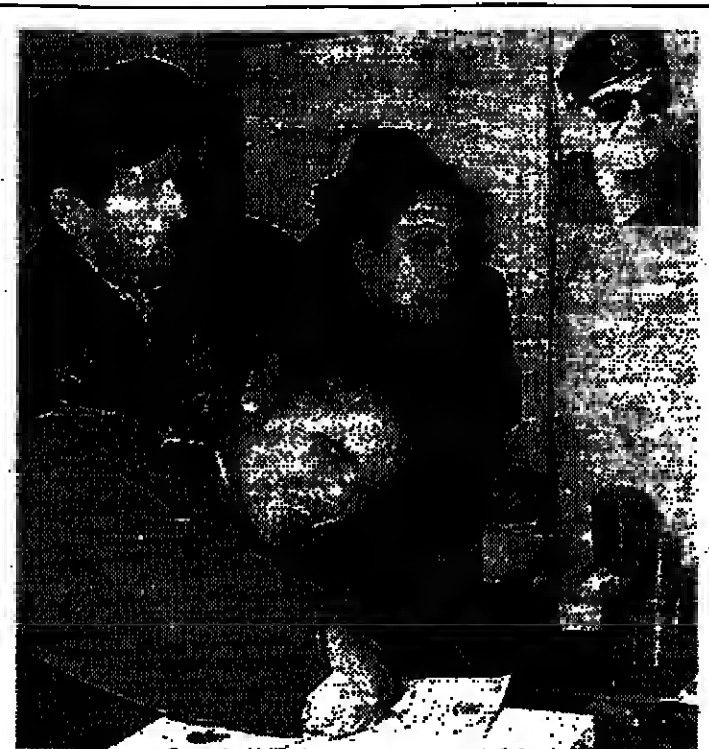
The agency has therefore concluded that any long-term monitoring must be "comprehensive, rigorous, and, as a result, intrusive."

Specifically, the agency says it would use such measures as "unannounced inspections of previously unmonitored locations." It would examine "records, equipment, materials and products," as well as conduct interviews, environmental monitoring and radiation surveys, and test samples of water, vegetation, air and soil.

Most problematic from Iraq's standpoint, the agency said it would need to conduct "unannounced inspections at new sites" to detect signs of banned activities. Such inspections infuriated Iraq when they were conducted by the United Nations Special Commission charged with dismantling Iraq's unconventional weapons. While the Special Commission inspects for biological and chemical weapons, the International Atomic Energy Agency monitors nuclear activities.

Air Strikes in Iraq — U.S. and British aircraft struck Iraqi air defense sites in the south Wednesday in response to "provocations," according to U.S. military authorities, Agence France-Presse reported from Washington.

No aircraft were damaged in the attack, near Taif, 270 kilometers (170 miles) southeast of Baghdad, and An Najaf, 160 kilometers south of the capital, the authorities said.



VOTE FROM THE HEART — A captain in the Syrian armed forces, identified only as Baddour, giving her blood thumbprint on Wednesday in a referendum to affirm President Hafez Assad, the only candidate, to a fifth 7-year term.

Addis Ababa Rules Out
Border War Cease-Fire

Compiled by Our Staff From Dispatches

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia — Ethiopia said Thursday that there would be no cease-fire with Eritrea in the two countries' border war unless Eritrea withdrew or was pushed out of the contested territory it occupies.

"Ethiopia," Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin said, "has no option but to fight the aggressor army, to root it out of our own territory, and Ethiopia has full confidence that it has the capacity and capability to achieve this objective."

Eritrea occupied the contested Badme region in the first round of the war last May, which lasted six weeks. Hostilities resumed Saturday.

Eritrea said that fighting subsided Wednesday but that there could be no cease-fire unless Ethiopia stopped its attacks.

A Western diplomat in the Eritrean capital of Asmara said: "I can confirm that there was no heavy fighting. We do not know of fighting either on the main front or on the other fronts."

The two countries' armies have been fighting at Geza Gerfese and around Kunin and Kimito along the 1,000-kilometer (600-mile) border, an Ethiopian government spokesman said.

President Bill Clinton and the United Nations Security Council both called Tuesday for an immediate end to the fighting between the two Horn of Africa nations. Mr. Clinton said he was "particularly alarmed" by the Ethiopian use of air power, which violates a U.S.-brokered moratorium the two sides signed last June after a month of fighting that left several thousand dead.

Eritrea said Ethiopian Antonov and MiG warplanes bombed the village of Deda in Tadi at dawn Tuesday, killing a family of five and wounding five other people.

Eritrea maintains it is still observing the moratorium on air strikes, although Ethiopia charged that the Eritrean aircraft had attacked the northern Ethiopian town of Adigrat. (Reuters, AFP)

BRIEFLY

Taleban Isolate Saudi Dissident

ISLAMABAD — The Taliban on Wednesday bowed to U.S. and British pressure and isolated the Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden, banning him from receiving visitors or having outside contacts, the Afghan Islamic Press reported.

"Osama bin Laden has been disallowed to meet any visitors or other people," the Pakistan-based private information service said, quoting a decree issued by the office of the Taliban's supreme leader, Mullah Mohammed Omar.

Mr. bin Laden has been accused by the United States of masterminding the bombings in August of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. (AFP)

Legal Ivory Trade to Resume

GENEVA — African ivory can be sold legally in international trade under an experimental program approved Wednesday, the United Nations said.

The project, opposed by some animal rights groups, will allow for ivory to be exported from Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe to Japan.

The ban on all trade in ivory was introduced nine years ago to protect the species, which had been run down by widespread poaching, but elephants have flourished in some countries, and game-protection officials have argued that they now have more elephants than their land can sustain. (AP)

Battle Reported in Algeria

ALGIERS — Helicopter gunships were pounding Islamic rebels holed up in a forest near Algiers on Wednesday, and hundreds of soldiers have been deployed to storm their hideout, the newspaper El Watan said.

Meanwhile, Islamic guerrillas killed five members of a government force and wounded two others in an ambush in Tebessa Province, about 480 kilometers (about 300 miles) east of Algiers, on Tuesday, the daily Al Khabar said.

El Watan said the helicopters were bombarding rebels in Sidi Ali Bounab forest in Tizi-Ouzou Province, 60 kilometers east of Algiers. It said the number of the trapped guerrillas was significant, without giving a figure.

The military operation started Tuesday after a "reputant" rebel tipped off security officials about the hideout, the newspaper added. The operation was continuing, it said. (Reuters)

Alaskan Species Recovering

ANCHORAGE — Pink and sockeye salmon, sea otters, certain seabirds and other species are recovering from the damage inflicted by the Exxon Valdez oil spill a decade ago, according to a report.

About half of the species harmed by the 1989 disaster are on their way to recovery, said the report, issued Tuesday by the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council.

The council, comprising three federal and three state trustees, manages the \$900 million that Exxon has promised to pay over a decade to settle state and federal civil lawsuits.

The Exxon Valdez tanker spilled millions of gallons of oil into Alaska's Prince William Sound after it ran aground. (Reuters)

UN Calls for Talks on Civilians in Israeli-Occupied Areas

Reuters

UNITED NATIONS, New York — The UN General Assembly called Tuesday for a conference to be held July 15 to ensure that the Fourth Geneva Convention on protecting civilians is respected in the Israeli-occupied territories, particularly the convention's ban on settlements.

With only the United States and Israel opposed, the assembly adopted a resolution by 115 votes to 2, with 5 abstentions, recommending that the 188 signatories of the convention attend such a conference at the UN office in Geneva.

Abstentions were cast by Australia, Bahamas, Cameroon, Romania and Swaziland.

Switzerland, as the depository of the 1949 convention, which deals with the protection of civilians in time of war, was asked to make preparations for the conference.

But its UN observer said that given the absence of provisions in the convention for convening such a meeting — never previously held — there were a number of questions that only the parties to the convention could settle, not Switzerland as the depository power.

The assembly acted at an emergency special session first summoned in April 1997 and reconvened four times since. The latest session, which began Friday, was requested by the 22-member Arab group, supported by the 114-member Nonaligned Movement.

The resolution reiterated those adopted by overwhelming majorities at previous sessions condemning Israel's failure to halt settlement activity. It referred particularly to a housing project at a site south of Jerusalem, called Har Homa in Hebrew and Jabel Abu Ghneim in Arabic, that Israel captured in the 1967 Middle East war.

The U.S. delegate, Peter Burleigh, said the resolution would "only serve to damage the climate" for Middle East negotiations. He called it an "unacceptable assault on the basic uses and meaning" of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Israel Sees Political Motive

In Jerusalem, Israel on Wednesday rejected the UN move as "based on political motives and not on humanitarian ones," Reuters reported.

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With Eye on UN Post, Holbrooke Settles Ethics Questions

By John Mintz
Washington Post Service

WASHINGTON — Richard Holbrooke, a veteran diplomat who engineered the Bosnia peace accord, has reached an agreement with the Justice Department under which he will pay \$5,000 to settle ethics allegations that have delayed his nomination to be U.S. ambassador to the United Nations.

Moments after the settlement was announced Tuesday, President Bill Clinton said he would soon submit the nomination for Senate confirmation.

In a statement, the president said that at a time when international crises from Iraq to Kosovo demand the leadership of the United States, "it is essential that we have a strong and capable diplomat" like Mr. Holbrooke as UN ambassador.

"I look forward to the Senate's timely consideration of his nomination," he said.

But a Senate staff member said the Foreign Relations Committee was preparing to re-examine all evidence in the conflict-of-interest allegations against Mr. Holbrooke, rather than accepting the Justice Department's deal. Jesse Helms, a Republican from North Carolina and the committee chairman, wants the committee staff to retrace the inquiry to determine

what the issue was and how it was resolved, said Marc Thiessen, a spokesman for Mr. Helms.

Congressional sources said that while Mr. Holbrooke is widely admired as an effective diplomat, he has ruffled some Senate feeling enough to make the confirmation hearings contentious. The allegations considered at the Justice Department centered on Mr. Holbrooke's activities in 1996.

ie Force'

the Logitech Wingman Force uses a series of... stick to and fro... several Internet newsgroups and Web... computer games report that feedback... with the cable-based stick feel more... and more harsh.

advantages and arguments aside... a janky gimmick, or does it give... more than just throbbing, sweaty palms?... many games out there where... improves player performance by providing... as to what's happening in the virtual... what the "rumble" is breaking loose... this indicates how close to the edge of... to pushing the virtual race car...

LATEST application of force feedback... the way to the computer mouse. Deliberate... technology by immersion, the device... in a tactile manner to on-screen clicks...

improving to the players of first-person... shooting games such as Quake and... preferred method of play often... of keyboard and mouse. A force-feedback... to convey the rumble of firing... or the agony of being hit by enemy fire... from a high terrace to a hard dungeon floor... his console video-game world. Nintendo... in 1997 when it introduced the Rumble Pak... cartridge that snaps into the Nintendo 64... This cartridge, which operates on two... it, houses a small motor that responds to... action cues.

has since come out with a controller... that does not use batteries... to represent force feedback at its most... biggest Miyamoto, the Nintendo game design... veteran Super Mario, hopes his latest best... changes that impression.

or the first time, a video-game accessory... on a proactive basis, shaking to clue players... as well as on a reactive basis, shaking... rise to something that has already happened... it mutes said.

the golden fleece of feedback: the sensation... you win. But, of course, there is a catch... a order for the Rumble Pak to work at all... mutes said, "players will need to search for... in them that will enable it."

eping It Simple

Pichar, the former managing director... AOL France, now in charge of setting... the French operations of Boxman. "I... want to respect the structure of comic... and distribution and build good relationships... with the music industry," he said. In... this reason, Boxman does not sell... border to customers, and is careful... avoid parallel importing channels.

BRIEFLY

ORT: This year for the first time, the number... is likely to match the number of men... Dow Group, a market research firm. Last... made Internet," Frank Gens, a senior vice president... 98, about 48 percent of the people on the... (sources from being a curiosity to a tool that... more appealing, particularly to women who... on work and home," Mr. Gens said. (UPI)

BOY INDEX

around the world:

Tuesday close	Pct. change previous week	Pct. change year to date
486.83	-0.57	+3.72
1,327.34	-7.83	+5.08
881.95	-6.63	+8.79
1,558.76	-3.17	+1.38

the past week. See Tech on the 10th

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- Technology Stocks Lead the Market
- Sub 5
- Mobile Chairman Is Shipping Down
- Sub 5-7
- Boeing Abandoning Supersonic Jet
- Sub 8
- On-Line Trading Hits Stride
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EDITORIALS/OPINION

Herald Tribune

PUBLISHED WITH THE NEW YORK TIMES AND THE WASHINGTON POST

Hong Kong Crunch

In the 19 months since Hong Kong reverted to China, the worst fears have not come true. Beijing has for the most part kept its hands off the former British colony, as promised, allowing it to manage its own affairs. Now the two entities may be approaching a crisis that determines whether Hong Kong can maintain substantive independence. It is "make-or-break time," the chairman of Hong Kong's bar association, Romy Tong, said on Tuesday.

A decision by Hong Kong's highest court triggered the confrontation. The decision ostensibly concerned the rights of children born in China to at least one Hong Kong parent to settle in Hong Kong. The court said they could, even if born out of wedlock. But the significance of the decision lay elsewhere, in its legal reasoning. For the first time, the court claimed for itself the authority to interpret Hong Kong law for Hong Kong.

On most matters, in other words, the final word should not rest with Beijing. And more than that, Hong Kong laws should be interpreted above all with a deference to Hong Kong autonomy and an understanding that rights and freedoms are "the essence of Hong Kong's civil society." The contrast

with China's arbitrary one-party dictatorship could not have been sharper. The decision has not sat well in Beijing. Four "legal experts" were the first to express dismay. Then Zhao Qizheng, a senior cabinet official, called the decision a mistake. On Tuesday a Foreign Ministry spokeswoman chimed in, saying the government was "closely following" the ruling.

The idea of "one country, two systems" was an experiment from the start. Trying to maintain an island of free enterprise and relative democracy within a Communist state was never going to be easy. But its success is crucial, not only to residents of Hong Kong but to China's credibility in the world and to those nations, such as the United States, which pledged to stand up for Hong Kong's freedom.

Now Beijing officials are threatening that success. Not only Hong Kong's liberty but its prosperity is at stake, since local and foreign companies alike will be reluctant to invest in Hong Kong if its rule of law can be compromised and superseded by party apparatchiks in Beijing. The Clinton administration should make clear that it, too, is "closely following" developments.

—THE WASHINGTON POST.

Onward to Censure

The possibility that a simple up-or-down vote on an appropriately tough censure resolution will not take place haunts the impeachment proceedings. Some Republican senators who oppose censure are threatening to filibuster any censure resolution, and it is not clear whether enough Republicans will support such a resolution to ensure that a clean vote happens. Particularly after the House Republican leadership, on the thinnest of constitutional pretexts, denied House members the opportunity to consider censure as an alternative to impeachment, this seems unfortunate. A failure to vote on censure would mean that the Senate's only official comment on Bill Clinton's behavior would be that it does not warrant his removal—which, while true enough, would hardly be a complete expression of the majority sentiment. After a year of consensus that Mr. Clinton's conduct is deplorable, he would walk.

To be sure, any senator who truly believes that a censure resolution that does no more than express the opinion of the Senate is unconstitutional could not, in good conscience, support censure. Although this view is wholly unsupported either by the constitution or by its history, senators should not be in the business of supporting bills that they think offend constitutional norms.

But no senator who seriously con-

templated supporting "findings of fact" in the context of the impeachment trial can turn around and argue now that there is a serious constitutional impediment to a censure resolution. Rather, if the vote is blocked, it will represent primarily an effort not at protecting the constitution but at making as stark as possible the decision to acquit the president. This might make sense as a matter of politics, but after more than a year of this scandal it seems as if a more nuanced outcome is a small favor to request.

It is certainly true that censure would, as some Republicans have complained, serve as a fig leaf for Democrats who want to acquit the president without admitting that they are giving him a pass. But that is not all it would be. To the contrary, there is value in the Senate going on record as saying that presidents are not permitted to behave as Mr. Clinton has. If only in the expressions of outrage that will make up the historical record that follows revelation of such behavior, there will be accountability for it.

This is admittedly a diffuse kind of penalty, one that might have little bite in the short term for a president who seems to be begging for such censure. In the long term, however, it is certainly an apt reaction, one that is at least worth a vote.

—THE WASHINGTON POST.

Microsoft and Fairness

For all its economic and technological prowess, Microsoft is too deaf when it comes to public relations. Last week, in the latest of a string of fiascos, it was embarrassed at its antitrust trial by a video demonstration that turned out to have been clumsily doctored. But the question before Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson in federal court is not images. It is whether the Justice Department is correct in arguing that Microsoft has illegally used its monopoly power to punish rivals and partners and expand its software business in other areas. So far the trial has demonstrated that the company faces a tough time challenging the government's case.

The original focus of the trial was on whether the company illegally combined its own Internet Explorer browser with its basic Windows software in order to muscle aside the rival browser made by Netscape. It has expanded into a larger government argument that Microsoft engaged in predatory conduct with rivals. It argues that it is not a monopoly, because of the fiercely competitive and fast-changing environment in computers. On Tuesday, it repeated its line that special deals with Intel and other companies are no different from various exclusive licensing arrangements throughout the industry.

As for tying its operating software to a browser, Microsoft argues that doing so is defensible as long as consumers get a better product out of it. In the last few weeks, several of Microsoft's witnesses have tried to show that consumers do indeed benefit from fully integrated computer and software

products. The Justice Department has repeatedly argued, on the other hand, that the chief advantage gained from product integration is to Microsoft itself, and that the company tried to transform its operating system choke hold into a club, forcing competitors and consumers to choose products that they might not otherwise want.

Microsoft has a few more weeks to buttress its case. But what is interesting about the trial is the extent to which the economic and technological landscape outside the courtroom has changed even since proceedings began last year. Microsoft's argument that it is not a monopoly at present seems questionable. Most experts find that a 95 percent market share in personal computer operating systems is a monopoly. On the other hand, many of these same experts speculate that in a matter of years there may be other products offering access to the Internet for consumers. It may soon be possible to pick up a telephone, turn on a television or flip on a handheld device to get on the Internet, without using Windows at all.

But that is not the real world yet. Right now, the Justice Department is right to demand that Microsoft not use its current monopoly to restrict consumer choices.

The federal government, applying antitrust principles more than a century old, has a constructive role to play in ensuring that certain basic ground rules of fair competition are observed. In a rapidly changing environment, the entire industry benefits from unfettered competition and basic fairness.

—THE NEW YORK TIMES.

Schroeder's Germany Has Decided to Be German

By Jim Hoagland

MUNICH — When Gerhard Schröder came to power in October, the chancellor's opening days seemed to herald a major shift in European politics. Diplomats and journalists frantically tracked signs that he was abandoning Helmut Kohl's fast alliance with France in favor of a London-Bonn joint venture.

"They have it wrong in asking if Schröder favors Britain over France, or France over Britain," Foreign Minister Hubert Vöhring reportedly told a colleague after observing the new German chancellor at work. "Schröder favors Germany. That is what we all have to understand."

Mr. Vöhring's shrewd analysis captures Mr. Schröder's ability to hide things in plain sight. He has fashioned the beginnings of a more activist German foreign policy openly centered on national interest. While cooperating with his U.S. or European partners, he is constantly looking over his shoulder at German unemployment and other domestic concerns that brought him to power, a preoccupation that he betrays while speaking to an audience of allied defense officials and experts here.

He had just confirmed that Germany will send 2,000 troops to help enforce a cease-fire in Kosovo if peace breaks out in that embattled Serbian-ruled

province. Then he paused to muse aloud on the irony of a coalition government of Social Democrats and Greens taking the taboo-breaking decision to dispatch German combat soldiers back to the Balkans for the first time since World War II.

"If I had said this a year ago, I would have been killed politically. ... But things change. We must say that Germany is now a fully fledged partner" in promoting European security. That includes taking on missions within NATO that the Social Democrats, the Greens and the rest of the German left have traditionally opposed.

Deftly handling a 90-minute barrage of often skeptical questions about his coalition's ability to adapt its once Marxist ideological stands to NATO policies, Mr. Schröder demonstrated his considerable skills as a communicator and synthesizer of conflicting viewpoints. He is a quintessentially modern politician of the post-Cold War era.

"Europe is willing to assume more responsibility in foreign and security policy, and that is in American interests," he told the Munich Conference on Security on Feb. 6, responding to anxiety in Washington about any-

thing that would weaken U.S. control over NATO.

But he also warned the Europeans that if they once again failed to be effective in taking on more of the defense burden, "then Europe will have no right to complain about others taking unilateral decisions."

This is the kind of argument of necessity that Mr. Schröder has used to begin to transform the political culture of the German left. Like Bill Clinton in the United States and Tony Blair in Britain, he won election here by outflanking his party's outdated beliefs and campaign styles while his opponents kept a more traditional view of constituencies that are in fact undergoing dramatic change.

Such tactics make for effective campaign politics. National electorates have been rewarding center-leftists like Mr. Schröder and Mr. Blair who emphasize their commitments to more effective management and market-centered reform of the welfare state. Conservatives like French President Jacques Chirac or, for that matter, Governor George W. Bush of Texas, do best in the polls when acceding their compassion for those left behind by the global economy.

But this homogenization of issues does not make for clear leadership. It

leaves foreign policy captive to constantly shifting domestic fortunes.

Pressed to repudiate a recent call by his Green foreign minister, Joschka Fischer, for NATO to rule out first use of nuclear weapons, Mr. Schröder made two things clear. One was that Germany will take "no" for an answer in the no-first-use debate. There will be no serious German challenge to current allied nuclear strategy at the NATO summit in Washington in April.

But the chancellor also emphasized that Mr. Fischer was free to continue raising the issue. If Germans were getting over taboo subjects, he suggested, others would have to do the same.

Behind the no-first-use controversy lies the much more hotly debated domestic issue of the role of nuclear power in the German economy. The Greens demand that the country's 19 nuclear reactors be shut down immediately, a goal that Mr. Schröder endorses but refuses to set any timetable to achieve.

After six years of navigating in foreign policy waters largely by the light of its domestic political needs, the Clinton administration must now deal with the first post-World War II German government which does the same. May the Clintonians enjoy the experience.

The Washington Post.

Kosovo: The Rambouillet Plan May Prove Too Sensible

By William Pfaff

PARIS — The plan for Kosovo put before Serbian and Kosovo delegates to the Rambouillet conference is the best plan that rational man could design. Reason is not enough, though, to determine what comes out of this peace conference, convened at the palatial summer residence of French presidents. Emotion and power will warp what results.

The plan, according to French sources, arbitrates the contradictory and passionate claims made by Serbia to Kosovo, this "sacred" province of Serbia, where the vast majority of the former Serbian population no longer choose to live; and claims made by the actual majority, composed of ethnic Albanians who want Kosovo to become part of a "Greater" Albanian nation, which has yet to exist.

It proposes the following for Serbs and Kosovo Albanians during the next three years:

- Kosovo will remain a part of Serbia, which will control its economy, money, defenses and foreign relations.

- Serbia will reduce its police presence in Kosovo to 2,575 men in defined tasks, including border control; and its army to 1,500 men, confined to a five-kilometer zone along the province's Albanian and Macedonian borders. Otherwise, the province will be policed by communal police.

- The Kosovo Albanians will disarm and dismantle their guerrilla army.

- Kosovo's population will rule itself in an autonomous fashion, through a 100-member Parliament representing all communities.

- The Parliament will elect a

president, who will name a prime minister. Kosovo will have its own judiciary.

- Something like 30,000 NATO troops will be present to see that all this happens.

- The whole arrangement will be reviewed in three years. The plan amounts to making Kosovo a voluntary international protectorate. Its acceptance relies on NATO having placed a gun at the Serbs' heads. It will work only if neither side makes a sudden move.

The method, as well as the result, may prove unpalatable to Serbia, whose leader, Slobodan Milosevic (who started all of this), might prefer that if Kosovo is to be taken from Serbia, it be done violently. He would then have an excuse to offer fellow Serbs, whom he has, during the last decade, repeatedly sent into war, defeat and national dismemberment.

He could say Kosovo was stolen from Serbia by NATO.

There are several violent alternatives to the peaceful solution proposed at Rambouillet. One would be for NATO to impose protectorate status on Kosovo. NATO air forces might interdict Serbian operations inside the province. As no Western power has the least interest in committing troops to a war for (or against) the Kosovars, their "Liberation Army" would be left to seize Kosovo's independence on its own. NATO would have become "the KLA's air force."

This would threaten the principal international interest to contain the consequences of ethnic Albanian irredentism in the rest of the Balkans. The

solution's advantages and disadvantages have already been discussed in this space. It is unlikely, but not impossible.

A second possibility, which I described last year as the "Balkan solution," would sponsor exchange of Kosovo's independence for reunion of Serbia with the Republika Srpska (now part of the Bosnian Republic). This could have fatal consequences for the international effort in Bosnia to establish a liberal political system there. It would be a policy of cynicism, but possibly of realism.

A third conceivable alternative may be called the "distant country" solution. The Western powers and the Contact Group

would abandon Kosovars and Serbs to their war, doing what they can, which might not be much, to keep Kosovo's Balkan neighbors out of it.

The unacceptability to liberal opinion of the last two possibilities is why Kosovars and Serbs are at Rambouillet today. Optimism about the outcome must rest on a belief that people can be forced to be reasonable. It could prove to be true.

The Rambouillet plan is a solution by international diktat. "We want peace on our continent!" said France's Jacques Chirac as he admonished Serbian and Kosovo delegates at Rambouillet on Saturday. He said the Contact Group "possesses the authority necessary to see that right, justice and peace triumph."

Iraq: Saddam Lords It Over Oil Prices

By George Yates

ROSSELL, New Mexico — Under the United Nations "oil for food" program, the world permits Iraq to sell oil if it uses the proceeds to buy food and medicine. It is a noble goal, but the policy is fatally flawed. Not only is the aid not getting to the Iraqi people — most supplies lie in warehouses, undistributed — but Saddam Hussein has been granted effective control over world oil prices.

Current proposals by the Clinton administration to lift the cap on Iraqi oil sales, and by the French to throw sanctions entirely to the wind, would only make a bad situation intolerably worse. Neither proposal would help the Iraqi people.

Both would bolster Saddam's already formidable abil-

ity to undermine rival Arab states and to depress American petroleum production.

The oil-for-food program permits Iraq to sell not a specific number of barrels but rather any amount worth up to \$10.6 billion annually. But, having permitted Iraq's production infrastructure to deteriorate (a sacrifice to its overwhelming military objectives), Saddam is now unable to muster oil worth more than \$5.4 billion every year. And he is unable to touch the proceeds.

That formula gives Iraq no incentive to produce in a sensible manner that conserves resources, or to get the highest possible price for its product. It gives Iraq every incentive to move its oil onto the market at whatever price is offered.

It is a truism in the oil business, as in other businesses that produce commodities, that the latest goods to enter the market have a disproportionate effect on the price. The result of this has been a dangerous concentration of power in Iraqi hands. Iraqi sales have been partly responsible for the fact that oil is now sold at fire-sale prices.

Most oil producers have seen their capital depleted by this market collapse, seriously handicapping their ability to add production capacity. This has substantially accelerated the natural depletion rate of existing fields worldwide, including those in the United States. That depletion, combined with increasing demand, is shrinking the world's ability to maintain a surplus of oil.

Many oil-exporting nations have tried to cut production to bring prices back up. Meanwhile, under the UN policy, Iraq is allowed to use \$600 million of its annual oil revenue to repair and expand its fields.

Saddam's regime has increased daily oil exports from around 700,000 barrels 14 months ago to 2.3 million barrels at the end of 1998. As consumer demand for oil increases, Iraq could cut its production and raise prices skyward.

Saddam wanted higher oil prices when he invaded Kuwait; to raise money that he needed to build his military forces. Now he cannot use oil to buy arms. But by keeping oil prices low, he is reducing the incomes of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq and others.

Worse, by undermining excess capacity worldwide, he is in a position to rock the oil markets in either direction — either destabilizing exporting countries, as he is doing today, or punishing the consuming countries by withholding oil from the market.

Judging from reported increases in reserves worldwide, the excess of oil produced over demand now stands at about 700,000 barrels a day. If that much overproduction causes depression-level prices, what would happen to prices if Saddam chose to withhold 1 or 2 million barrels a day, as he now could?

The writer, chairman of the Independent Petroleum Association of America, a trade group representing 8,000 oil and gas producers, contributed this column to The New York Times.

IN OUR PAGES: 100, 75 AND 50 YEARS AGO

1899: Walking Sticks

PARIS — The revival of the walking stick craze is very noticeable at the West End of London. Smart women are to be seen in numbers, carrying elaborate looking sticks or canes in lieu of gloves or parasols. The fad may seem a trifle mannish to people of old-fashioned tastes, but it unquestionably affords abundant opportunity for graceful posing and that artistic play of movement which leads an additional charm to the presence of a pretty woman.

1924: Klan Rivalries

CHICAGO — Mob rule was still at grips with the law in the mining town of Herrin. Despite the presence of fifteen companies of militia and the declaration of martial law following the bloody fighting of yesterday [Feb. 9], when two men were killed and many injured, the Knights of the

Klxx Klan still held the town hall and refused to bow before the orders of the military commanders. Eleven persons were arrested. All were members of the party that killed Cagle, a Klansman, who headed the mob that descended upon a meeting of the Knights of the Flaming Circle, a rival organization, and put them to rout after a battle.

1949: Indian Sentence

NEW DELHI — Nathuram Vinayak Godse, confessed assassin of Mahatma Gandhi, and Narayan Dattatraya Apte, leader of the conspiracy which led to the murder, were sentenced to life in prison. Five other defendants, who have been on trial on charges of conspiracy were sentenced to life imprisonment. The prisoners being led from the dock began shouting slogans. "Long live the Hindu religion, Pakistan will be destroyed, Hindu Hindi Hindustan."

Herald Tribune
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Editor for Asia: Michael Richardson, 5 Convent Road, Singapore 119001. Tel: 4742-7768. Fax: (61) 224-2334.
Mag. Dir. Asia: Nigel J. Oakes, #7201, 191 Jinn Road, Hong Kong. Tel: 852-2922-1188. Fax: 852-2922-1190.
Gen. Mgr. Germany: T. Schiller, Friedrichstr. 15, 69323 Frankfurt/M. Tel: 49 69 97712604. Fax: 49 69 97712605.
U.S. Office: 850 Third Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022. Tel: (212) 723-3890. Fax: (212) 723-8783.
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OPINION/LETTERS

C'mon, Janet Reno, Give Ken Starr the Heave-Ho

By Maureen Dowd

WASHINGTON — You go, girlfriend. Do not get bogged down in your usual dilly-dallying, shilly-shallying thing. Dump the guy, Janet. He is a loser. Worse, he is a stalker. Maybe he did not do rope lines, but Kenneth Starr is more creepily obsessed with tracking and trapping Bill Clinton than Monica Lewinsky ever was. Janet Reno, the attorney general, has been stewing about all the independent prosecutor's transgressions: how his team mishandled Ms. Lewinsky at the mall, how his office leaked and leaked, how Mr. Starr steamrolled the attorney general into expanding his authority into the Lewinsky affair without revealing his office's contacts with Paula Jones's lawyers. Even though the president thinks the prosecutor is evil, he is loath to play Richard Nixon to Mr. Starr's Archibald Cox. But when it came out that Mr. Starr was calculating how he could indict Mr. Clinton on criminal charges while he is still in office, or the day he leaves for Hollywood, the Clinton crowd realized that a wooden stake might be required. Beyond Mr. Starr's shy smile, harkens the heart of the undead. He comes back and back and back for more blood — from Webster



Hubbell, from Susan McDougal, from Julie Hatt Steele, from Mr. Clinton. Maybe poor Sidney Blumenthal is next. (Only Mr. Starr could inspire "poor" before "Sidney Blumenthal.") Janet is all we have. She has been fantasizing about slaying the prosecutor. Certainly there are oodles of reasons to can him. He wasted a federal fortune investigating all the serious issues — Whitewater, Travelgate, Filegate — that could have entailed the kind of public misconduct that Americans care about. He found nothing, and instead came up with a sizzling impeachment potboiler. The New York Times reported Wednesday that Justice Department officials were starting to build a case against the man who built the case against his boss. David Johnston and Don Van Natta revealed that Mr. Starr's deputies assured Ms. Reno's department that they had not had any contact with the Paula Jones lawyers when they sought to expand their investigation into the president's affair with the intern. Based on contemporaneous notes of that crucial meeting in January 1998, it appears that the Office of Independent Counsel misled the Justice Department, since Linda Tripp's faithful call to Mr. Starr's office was preceded

by a conversation between one of Mr. Starr's deputies and a lawyer who had worked on the Jones case since 1994. It may seem that Ms. Reno is out to help the president, but really she may be rescuing the Republicans. The Republicans are not care about Mr. Starr's ethics. But they should care about his incompetence. The Republican Party is supposed to be the party of big business. If Mr. Starr were a CEO, the stockholders would be clamoring for his head. He tried a hostile takeover and lost. And the company's stock has plummeted. Despite public disdain for impeachment, Mr. Starr still managed to sell the House managers a

weak case. The fact that the managers' case is entirely built on Mr. Starr's tainted enterprise is why it is impossible for reasonable people to accept their arguments, even though most reasonable people believe the president lied and schemed to hide evidence. After the House Republicans bullied the impeachment into the Senate, they were again led astray by Mr. Starr, who went to court to help them drag Ms. Lewinsky back from California. Any idiot should have known that on the stand, Ms. Lewinsky would try to protect the president, not bury him. She may have "mixed emotions" about her former boyfriend, but she hates Mr. Starr with a passion. When things got rough for the Republicans, the independent counsel, with his tin ear for public relations, made them worse: Word got out of his musings about indicting the president while still in office. People used to trust the Republicans to be practical. As Calvin Coolidge put it, "The chief business of the American people is business." But Mr. Starr, with cheerleading from the Christian right, helped turn Republicans into a party of scolds brandishing scarlet letters. Their new motto is more ominous: "Your business is our business." So fire him, Janet, fire him. His business is our business. The New York Times.

U.S. Culture Is Thriving Despite All the Junk

By Geneva Overholser

WASHINGTON — Loathing the culture is as American as apple pie. Americans loathe it from the right, deprecating the nation's moral and social fabric, and yearning for traditions lost. Americans also loathe it from the left, bemoaning the distorting grip of capitalism and yearning for more government funding. Even when good news pierces the gloom, as it has recently, Americans hasten to assert that,

The average American buys more than twice as many books today as in 1947. Television and the Internet have clearly not vanquished the book.

From 1965 to 1990, the number of symphony orchestras in the United States grew from 58 to nearly 300, opera companies from 27 to more than 150, regional theaters from 22 to 500. Theater ticket sales are up. More American students are studying abroad.

MEANWHILE

socially and culturally, the country is still headed for hell in a handbasket. Take a recent piece in the National Journal called "This Perplexing Union."

On the eve of a new century, there is no escaping the good news," it says. But do not get too cheery: "Much of our popular culture is garbage, celebrity is almost infinitely more valued than achievement, there is little stigma to greed and materialism."

Last summer, the culture ministers of 19 nations, including America's best friends, met in Ottawa to ponder how they could protect themselves and their culture from — well, from the United States and its culture. The Americans were not invited.

So how exactly does it look these days, this culture found by many so offensive, this "moral rot" that some small upstart America? Let us check out a few indices of moral and cultural health, starting with young people.

After two decades of increase, the proportion of high school students who have had sex has fallen 11 percent in the 1990s, according to a federal report released last autumn. For the first time this decade, fewer than half reported having sex; among boys, the decline was particularly striking — 49 percent, versus 57 percent in 1991.

Or take alcohol. In 1980, 72 percent of high school seniors said they had consumed alcohol; recently, compared with 51 percent in 1996. In 1985, 17 percent of students said they had tried cocaine, compared with 7 percent in 1996. Violent crime is at its lowest point in 25 years.

As for cultural indicators, a Cato Institute report last autumn called "Is Our Culture in Decline?" cited some dramatic statistics.

Of course, American culture is far more diverse, a fact that enriches or diminishes it, depending on your view. Some of the greatest cultural debates rage over the quick embrace of fleeting trends and the lack of respect for the great voices of the past. But Americans seem in fact to be blessed with a culture that can appreciate Mozart even as it enables women songwriters and singers to soar.

Laments over cultural decline echo through history. Listen to this 1808 European observer on the tragedy of the proliferation of popular novels through circulating libraries: "There is scarcely a street of the metropolis, or a village in the country, in which a circulating library may not be found. nor is there a corner of the empire, where the English language is understood, that has not suffered from the effects of this institution."

Today, Americans focus on some foul-mouthed rapper as if he were the sum total of all that they do and think, look at and listen to — as if he were somehow more representative of American culture than Duke Ellington or Martha Graham or Alfred Hitchcock.

All of this is not to say Americans could not use some uplift. For exactly this purpose, the poet and author Czeslaw Milosz assembled "A Book of Luminous Poets." It is an anthology of poetry — an art form which, as Mr. Milosz says, "cannot look at things of this earth other than as colorful, variegated and exciting, and so it cannot reduce life, with all its pain, horror, suffering and ecstasy, to a unified tonality of boredom or complaint."

A frequent review of the many good things going on around us, and a dip into Mr. Milosz's delightful collection: There's a fine cure for pessimism, whatever direction it is coming from. The Washington Post.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

New Air Strikes on Iraq

Regarding "U.S. Widening Its Targets in Iraq" (Feb. 4):

Each day, Iraq perfects its role as a David against the American Goliath, an image that is certainly not lost on Middle Eastern sensibilities. Each day, Iraq can flip on its radar for a few minutes and cause the United States and Britain to scramble warplanes and hurl down millions of dollars worth of missiles and bombs. Throwing money away with a grand gesture is one thing; being tricked into squandering it is another, and the cooling of U.S. relations with the Gulf states could stem less from their liking of Saddam than from their reluctance to be seen in the company of fools.

FRANK LUDWIG GROSSMANN

Nicosia, Cyprus

Elia Kazan, Teacher of Actors

Regarding "Elia Kazan Deserves Oscar for Talent and Integrity" (Meanwhile, Jan. 27) by Richard Cohen:

Mr. Kazan also deserves recognition for the creation of a unique idea that had a wider influence on the cinema than his remarkable films: the founding of the Actors' Studio. It was and remains a place where inexperienced and professional actors could meet on equal terms without charge. Mr. Kazan modestly called it "a place for actors to get out of the rain." It provided far more than that. At the height of his career, Mr. Kazan would spend hours with me and other beginners teaching us that our greatest asset was our own experience.

JACK GARFINKL

Paris

Boeing's Government Subsidies

Regarding "Boeing Abandons Supersonic Jetliner" (Feb. 8):

The article suggests that one of the reasons for Boeing abandoning its plans to develop a supersonic airliner was competition in the global aerospace market from "government-subsidized competitors in Europe." This is a very thin veil of allegation against Airbus Industrie. But the article clearly demonstrates that Boeing receives subsidies from the U.S. government. How else would you describe the \$1.6 billion mentioned in the article that NASA poured into the supersonic jetliner's development? This development money would have benefited only Boeing.

STEPHEN KLEIN

Heidelberg, Germany

The Carving of Jordan

Regarding "Hussein Ridden Assassins and Arab Wrath" (Feb. 8):

The writer states that Winston Churchill, then Britain's colonial secretary, "carved" Transjordan out of Syria. However, Transjordan was "carved" out of the Palestine British Mandate and not out of Syria. In 1948, Transjordan, renamed Jordan, annexed the West Bank. The Palestine Mandate comprised adequate territory for the eventual establishment of two states, one Arab and one Jewish. The present quandary in the region lies in the difficulties in "carving" out a viable third state in the remaining third of the original mandate.

HENRYK EISENBERG

Rehovot, Israel

BOOKS

CINDERELLA & COMPANY
Backstage at the Opera
With Cecilia Bartoli

By Manuela Hoeltzer

Illustrated: 262 pages, \$25.

Alfred A. Knopf

Reviewed by Anthony Tommasini

MANUELA HOELTZER

HOELTZER'S

backstage look at the Cecilia Bartoli

phenomenon and the opera

world in general is the most

perceptive and hilariously

honest book on the making

and marketing of opera to

come along in some time.

But it did not turn out quite

the way Hoeltzer, a

Pulitzer Prize-winning former

critic and editor at The Wall

Street Journal, intended. The

original idea was to provide a

behind-the-scenes report on

an indisputably excellent

singer who had achieved

national popularity before her

30th birthday.

For two years, leading up to

a new production of Bartoli's

signature opera, Rossini's

"Cenerentola" at the Met in

1997, Hoeltzer had

exclusive access to the singer and

her circle: her mother, a

former chorus soprano and

still Bartoli's most trusted

coach; her worldly Italian

boyfriend; her savvy man-

ager, Jack Mastromei; and a

whole cast of recording ex-

ecutives and attendant con-

ductors who pass through the

story like comprimario char-

acters in an opera buffa.

Yet, though Bartoli was quite cooperative, she proved an exasperating subject. Ultimately the reason for this particular Italian mezzo-soprano, gifted as she is, has generated such tenacious loyalty, particularly among her American fans (the Italian public has never been quite as enthralled), is a bit inexplicable, and after a while you sense Hoeltzer's frustration.

This is not a typical case of a biographer growing jaded the more she learns about her subject. From the first time Hoeltzer encountered Bartoli's singing, on a recording of Rossini's "Barber of Seville," she was smitten.

Here was "a smooth, glimmering truffle of a voice," she writes in "Cinderella & Company," "astonishing in its virtuosity and range."

Still, the Bartoli material must have seemed insufficient for an entire book. So, happily for readers, Hoeltzer introduces us to just about everyone operatic she met during those two years, interspersed with collected bits of wisdom and gossip.

We read about the great Renata Tebaldi's first visit to the United States in 20 years, opera's self-absorbed new love couple, Roberto Alagna and Angela Gheorghiu, the surreal planning meetings for James Levine's gargantuan 25th-anniversary celebration, Renée Fleming, the new generation and much more.

The resulting book is a bit of this, a bit of that. But Hoeltzer is such an interesting observer and beguiling writer that you eagerly follow her anywhere.

Her snappy sentences often end with surprise punches: she defines the period of bel canto as a tradition in which "embellishments, fluid scales, interpolations and good taste were expected even of tenors." She has a novelist's ability to capture a person in a few wry phrases. Here she is on Joseph Volpe, general manager of the Met: "A blunt guy with an opera villain's chin beard and a healthy hunger for prestige, the 55-year-old Volpe had no mangled his way past Levine on the totem pole, acquiring excellent suits and independent taste along the way."

Because of Hoeltzer's reputation as an unsparring critic and reporter, it is amazing that so many people in the business talked with her so freely, notably the powerful manager and public relations maestro Herbert Breslin, whom Hoeltzer calls a "motor-mouthed, bullet-headed, forever tan egomaniac." Breslin's soliloquy on how he and his prime client, Luciano Pavarotti, showed everyone how real money could be made in opera is breathtaking in its honesty and shamelessness.

The sections on Bartoli are the heart of the book. There is ample evidence of her superb musicianship, determination and unconventionally interesting career choices. Like that of making her Met debut in Mozart's "Così fan Tutti" in the relatively small

role of Despina, the maid. "I want to have some pleasure out of my debut," Bartoli is quoted as saying, "and maybe change perceptions of what is a debut at the Met."

Fans will gain some perspective on Bartoli's penchant for missing performances. Several notable cancellations seem to have been genuinely precipitated by illness, travel snafus and even personal tragedy: During the years covered in the book, Bartoli's beloved younger brother died of a brain tumor. But sometimes her cancellations are maddening to read about, as when a healthy Bartoli pulled out of a live broadcast of "Così" because two lead male singers were ill, and Levine, also ill, was stuck in another city. That millions in the international radio audience were counting on hearing her did not seem to matter.

But never the most mellow booth, opera singers have to put up with pushy managers, clueless directors and drafty rehearsal rooms and still exercise their unearthly voices in the most difficult vocal music ever conceived. If anything, with the current economic squeeze in the recording industry, not to mention instant worldwide communications, there is more pressure than ever.

Hoeltzer makes few predictions, either about Bartoli or the field in general. But it is immensely fun and informative to read her account of the problems.

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BRIDGE

By Alan Truscott

ONE of the most remarkable recoveries of 1998 occurred in the semifinals of the Gold Cup, Britain's equivalent of the Vanderbilt Knockout.

Playing in London with 40 of 64 deals completed, a team led by Howard Cohen

trifled by 57 imps against a

slippery team led by David Price.

An impressive resurgence fol-

lowed, but with one deal re-

maining, Cohen was still 8

imps in the hole.

He and his teammates

needed an exciting deal that

would generate a swing.

Could they win by outbidding

their opponents? Or by out-

playing them?

Paradoxically, they won by

failing the bidding test.

presented by the deal shown in the diagram. It was reported by Robert Sheehan, a member of the Cohen team, in his bridge column in The Times of London.

Consider North-South's prospects in six spades. The chance of losing one spade trick, not two, is 79 percent, slightly better in the unlikely event that a trump is led. If the opening lead is a heart, South is most likely to lose a side-suit trick. He is worse off but still in good shape after a minor-suit lead: He would need either a favorable diamond position or a winning heart finesse.

North-South for the Price team bid was Gumar Hallberg and Colin Simpson. They bid as shown to six spades, using the "new-

minor-forcing" device after a one no-trump rebid, which is popular on both sides of the Atlantic.

The heart lead made South happy, but he was wrapped in gloom when he led to the spade ace, continued with the nine and saw East discard. His team had lost 13 imps and lost the match by 5, for in the replay North-South rested cautiously in four spades.

It was a heavy punishment for being in the right contract, and South was left with the sad reflection that he could have saved the day by finessing the spade nine, clearly the wrong play in theory but the right one on this occasion.

The other four members of the winning team, who

marched on to an easy victory in the final, were Nicci Sandkvist, Frederick Wrang, Irving Gordon and Boris Schapiro.

North (D)
♠ A 3
♥ 10 9 8
♦ K Q 10 9
♣ K 10
South (S)
♠ K J 5 4
♥ A 10 8 7
♦ A 10 9 8
♣ K 10 9 8

West led the heart 10.
The bidding:
North South
1 ♠ 1 ♠
2 ♠ 2 ♠
3 ♠ 3 ♠
4 ♠ 4 ♠
Pass Pass

West led the heart 10.

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e-mail: The.INTERMARKET@bt.com

INTERNATIONAL

NATO Prepares a Force To Disarm Combatants

Advance Unit of 10,000 Ready to Move Fast

By William Drozdiak
Washington Post Service

BERLIN — The NATO alliance is planning to send an advance force of up to 10,000 troops into Kosovo to begin disarming combatants within days if a peace agreement is reached between the Serbian authorities and ethnic Albanian leaders, alliance military and diplomatic sources said Wednesday.

NATO ambassadors in Brussels approved an accelerated timetable to minimize delay between a prospective peace deal and its enforcement by allied military forces.

The international community has set a Feb. 19 deadline for agreement between Serbian and ethnic Albanian negotiators, who are meeting under French and British mediation in Rambouillet outside Paris.

Senior NATO diplomats said all operational concepts for the vanguard "enabling force" should be completed by Monday so the necessary troops could be deployed in the vicinity of the southern Serbian province in order to move in quickly once a peace settlement is achieved.

Military officials said the first soldiers to hit the ground in Kosovo would come from an allied rapid reaction force based in Rheinland, Germany, and commanded by Lieutenant General Mike Jackson of Britain.

Those troops would join up with 1,700 members of a French-led force already based in Macedonia.

They were sent there to stand by to protect about 1,000 civilian monitors sent to Kosovo to verify the terms of a truce reached in October that has all but fallen apart.

Along with Britain and France, Germany, Italy and Spain are planning to contribute the lion's share of soldiers to the NATO-led force, alliance military sources said.

President Bill Clinton has said only that he would "seriously consider" doing so, but NATO officials said there was unanimous consent in allied capitals that an American presence — even as small as 2,000 soldiers — would be a vital ingredient for success.

"We cannot have the Americans out and only the Europeans present on the ground," a senior European diplomat said. "That is a recipe for the kind of policy disaster that took place in Bosnia."

Alliance ambassadors also agreed that there would be no question of "dual key" arrangements and that the commander of a Kosovo peacekeeping force would report directly to the North Atlantic Council.

France had suggested that the six-nation Contact Group — the United States, Russia, Britain, France, Germany and Italy — should be consulted concerning any air strikes, but this idea was rejected.

NATO military officials said the key consideration for them was to get peacekeeping troops deployed quickly to keep any peace deal from unraveling.

In the case of enforcing the Bosnia peace agreement, NATO forces were mobilized during a three-week hiatus between the conclusion of the Dayton accords and signing of a peace agreement in Paris.

But in Kosovo, alliance forces will not have any extra time to prepare for their mission if a deal is worked by the fixed deadline. As a result, military planners have settled on the idea of dispatching a heavily armed advance guard known as "Tier Three" forces already in training to bolster the French-led extraction force in Macedonia.

The initial deployment of up to 10,000 troops would eventually be supplemented by other soldiers from alliance and other countries that could bring the NATO-led force level in Kosovo as high as 30,000 — depending on the degree of cooperation they receive from the Serbs and the ethnic Albanian rebels.

Foreign Minister Zoran Djindjic of Yugoslavia warned this week that his country, embracing the republics of Serbia, which includes the province of Kosovo, and Montenegro, would "under no conditions" accept the presence of foreign troops on its soil.

The State Department spokesman, James Rubin, said that Belgrade's failure to accept the peace implementation force could be sufficient to trigger NATO air strikes.

"They would be making a big mistake to hold up this agreement over the question of allowing forces in if the Kosovo Albanians are prepared to do so," Mr. Rubin said.

NATO officials said they were optimistic that the Serbs would ultimately give "passive" consent to a peacekeeping force once they realized it would be in their own interests.

The Serbs are being asked to draw down their security forces from 10,000 to 2,500 under the terms of the interim peace proposal. If they do so, the sources said, the Serbs will recognize the value of NATO soldiers disarming and keeping in check the Kosovo Liberation Army, whose guerrillas have been waging bloody hit-and-run tactics against Serbs for the past year.

"The Serbs may never openly say yes to the presence of foreign troops in Kosovo, but we expect that in the end they will not say no, either," a senior diplomat said. "If they did so, the alternatives are pretty brutal."

Serbian President Awaits

President Milan Milutinovic of Serbia is expected at the peace talks on Thursday, Agence France-Presse reported from Rambouillet.

A spokeswoman for the Foreign Ministry said the co-hosts of the peace conference would also return on Thursday.



Bodo Hombach, standing, and Claudius Fischbach of the German Embassy explaining the proposal in Washington.

Bonn to Compensate Victims of Nazis

In Move to Avoid Lawsuits, State Agrees to Start Fund Financed by Industry

By David E. Sanger
New York Times Service

WASHINGTON — The German government said it had agreed in principle to establish a huge compensation fund, financed by the biggest names in German industry and banking, to compensate victims of Nazi horrors.

The proposal, announced here Tuesday by a top aide of Germany's new chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, appears to be an effort to short-circuit a wave of lawsuits in American courts against German companies that used slave labor and forced labor during World War II or profited from seizures of assets belonging to Jews and other victims of the Nazis.

German officials said the size of the fund was still to be determined. But they have made it clear that they want to avoid the kind of international bruising that Switzerland suffered for nearly two years as its government fought legal and diplomatic action against Swiss banks. Ultimately, the two largest banks in Switzerland reached a \$1.25 billion settlement that was formally signed last month.

At a news conference here Tuesday, Mr. Schröder's chief of staff, Bodo Hombach, said it would take some time before the German government, its major corporations, Jewish groups and lawyers

representing Holocaust victims settled on the size of a fund to resolve outstanding claims against German companies.

But participants in the talks said they thought the amount paid by the Swiss banks would be a starting point and that the German settlement — which is likely to include Deutsche Bank AG, Daimler-Benz AG, Volkswagen AG, Siemens AG and others — could easily reach into the billions of dollars.

What the German concerns want in return is exactly what the Swiss got: a "global" agreement that ends virtually all such suits. Mr. Hombach also suggested Tuesday that Germany had concluded, after watching the Swiss experience, that a prolonged fight was not in the interest of the country or its companies.

"You could legally win and lose your reputation," he said.

In many ways the Swiss and German cases are not comparable: Switzerland was neutral in the war, and the suits against its banks marked the first time in half a century that the Swiss had been confronted with their mixed wartime record.

In contrast, successive generations of Germans have wrestled with their national legacy. Mr. Hombach said Monday that since Germany's surrender in 1945, the government had paid 140 bil-

lion Deutsche marks, or about \$80 billion at current exchange rates, in war reparations and aid.

But there has never been a settlement by German companies, including those that forced East Europeans to work in wartime factories for little or no pay.

The German announcement, which came after lengthy negotiations Monday at the U.S. State Department, won praise from the World Jewish Congress, which pressed the Swiss case and has been a central player in the negotiations with Germany.

But lawyers for the plaintiffs in the suits, who have often been at odds with the World Jewish Congress, were more cautious. Several said that a meeting here Monday night with Mr. Hombach had marked the beginning of a dialogue but that it was premature to say any kind of agreement was in the offing.

The talks to reach a settlement are likely to be difficult, given the competing interests of Jewish groups, plaintiffs and lawyers, some of whom are still haggling over their fees for the settlement with Swiss banks.

The German companies have an extraordinary incentive to come to some kind of settlement, especially now that the euro, the common European currency, provides a new means for them to expand their operations around the world.

BRIEFLY

U.S. Pilot Criticized In Gondola Deaths

CAMP LEJEUNE, North Carolina — The commander of a Marine unit being court-martialed for an accident that killed 20 people in an Italian ski gondola last year has sharply criticized the pilot's conduct during the flight.

The commander, Lieutenant Colonel Richard Muegge, testified that the crew's decisions to carry a video camera in the cockpit and to execute a 360-degree roll during the low-altitude flight were unsafe and unwise. The statement from an immediate supervisor, on the second day of the court-martial here, was seen as a damaging assessment of the defendant, Captain Richard Ashby, 31, of Mission Viejo, California.

Captain Ashby, whose aircraft sliced through a cable over a winter resort in the Dolomites and sent the gondola plummeting to the ground, could be sentenced to life in prison if convicted on the 20 counts of involuntary manslaughter lodged against him. (WP)

Madrid Opposes Meeting of Kurds

MADRID — Eager not to upset Turkey, the Spanish government intends doing all it can to prevent a meeting of a Kurdish "parliament-in-exile" in the northern Basque region, the interior minister said Wednesday.

The minister, Jaime Mayor Oreja, said the proposed Kurdish meeting, which would be held in July, was "a propaganda exercise for a terrorist group."

Turkey has expressed strong disapproval over the decision Tuesday by the Basque regional parliament to play host to the Kurdish group, made up of 65 Kurds who live in various European cities. (AP)

NATO Allies to Meet

BONN — Chancellor Gerhard Schröder of Germany was to fly to Washington on Thursday for a meeting with President Bill Clinton on issues expected to range from NATO strategy to Holocaust compensation claims. Mr. Schröder and his wife will meet Mr. Clinton for lunch at the White House and return to Bonn later in the day. German news organizations have been reporting that the U.S. president is concerned about Bonn's ideas about NATO. (Reuters)

At the Rambouillet Talks, A Duel of Personalities

By Jane Perlez
New York Times Service

RAMBOUILLET, France — In the hush of Kosovo, Hashim Thaci is known as "Snake." No one seems to be quite sure why, but some suggest that the 29-year-old political-science graduate of a Swiss university has the ability to slither away from battles — just in time.

For the negotiators at the Kosovo peace talks, Mr. Thaci is a key figure — tough, smart, ambitious and arrogant. But diplomats who know Mr. Thaci as head of the Political Directorate of the rebels' Kosovo Liberation Army say it is hard to figure out exactly how he thinks or where he stands.

One diplomat said he believed Mr. Thaci was open to Western ideas and democratic institutions. Another said Mr. Thaci might be influenced by Marxism. Such uncertainties about the characters in the 16-member ethnic Albanian delegation to the peace talks, and to a lesser extent on the Serbian side, are among the many factors that make it difficult to predict the outcome of the talks here.

In the 13-member Serbian delegation, there are three men of known quality — men who are adjutants to the Yugoslav leader, Slobodan Milosevic.

Of the top Serbian delegates, Western diplomats are quite familiar with Nikola Sainovic, a deputy prime minister of Yugoslavia and the point man for Mr. Milosevic in Kosovo, and with Ratko Markovic, a Serbian deputy prime minister.

The close involvement of Mr. Sainovic in Kosovo was illustrated last month after telephone conversations he had with a Serbian general, Sreten Lukic, were monitored by Western diplomats. They showed that Mr. Sainovic had tried to cover up circumstances of a massacre of ethnic Albanian civilians at the Kosovo village of Racak, diplomats said.

A report by monitors concluded the killings had been retaliation by Serbs for the ambush killing of four of their men. In the conversations, Mr. Sainovic could be heard asking if it would be possible to make the killings look as if they were the result of a battle between the Kosovo Liberation Army and the Serbs.

Mr. Sainovic is known around Belgrade as "Sava Patton" — a nickname intended to show his preference for scorched-earth tactics.

By contrast, Mr. Markovic, a law professor, represents Mr. Milosevic by ordaining as legal whatever political maneuver Mr. Milosevic needs, according to Serbs. In 1996, Mr. Markovic found legal justification for overruling local Serbian

elections that opposition parties had won, a ruling that provoked demonstrations.

But as the negotiators deal with the two sides sequestered here, the complexities of the ethnic Albanian delegation are the most important to grasp.

Ibrahim Rugova, who has been twice elected president of Kosovo by the ethnic Albanians, is known well to the negotiators for his decade-long campaign of nonviolent resistance to Serbian rule.

But more vital to the negotiators will be the figures from the insurgency and Veton Surroi, a prominent newspaper publisher who presents himself as an independent in the murky world of ethnic Albanian politics. The son of a Yugoslav diplomat to Mexico and Bolivia, Mr. Surroi speaks excellent English and is a favorite of diplomats visiting Kosovo.

But his blunt manner and often contrary opinions have not won him favor in some quarters of the U.S. State Department. Even so, Washington recognizes him as perhaps the best bridge between the militant Kosovo Liberation Army and the fairly ineffectual Mr. Rugova.

Mr. Surroi can often be found in the restaurants of Pristina, the capital of Kosovo, cell phone at hand, and as the publisher of Koha Ditore, the largest-circulation paper in Kosovo, he has an important platform.

So far, Mr. Surroi has shown a sort of urbane disdain for the negotiations, but colleagues say he has made little secret of his ambition to be president of Kosovo.

An important Kosovo Liberation Army official in the delegation is Jakup Krasniqi, who was imprisoned by the Serbs for eight years.

Western diplomats in Kosovo who dealt with Mr. Krasniqi during a recent crisis, involving the release of eight Yugoslav soldiers captured by the guerrillas, described him as fair. He is part of the rebels' directorate that holds together a network of warlords.

In the last few months, Mr. Krasniqi has made a point of traveling in many regions of Kosovo, diplomats said, and seems to have concluded that the fighting should end. "He knows the rank and file don't want more fighting," said an American who knows him.

Almost unknown to the negotiators is Xhavit Haliti, a key organizer for the rebels. He has been based in Tirana, the Albanian capital, and appears to have been in charge of overseeing the arms flow over the northern Albanian mountains into Kosovo.

From outside Kosovo, Benar Bukoshi, a urologist based in Germany, has been the major fund-raiser for the money coming from Albanians living abroad.

AVALANCHE: At French Ski Resort, a Search for Survivors Continues After 10 Die

Continued from Page 1

Chamonix area Wednesday, officials said, but there were no reports of injuries.

The people killed in the avalanche Tuesday included four children, three men and three women, the police said.

Earlier, more than 20 people were pulled out of the snow alive. Five of the survivors suffered from minor injuries.

Meanwhile, rescue workers Wednesday were renewing their search for a 28-year-old British skier in the French Alpine resort of Courchevel. The skier, who was not identified, was skiing off marked trails Tuesday when hit by an avalanche.

Snowslides killed at least three people in Switzerland earlier this week, including a couple inside their restaurant at a ski station.

The avalanches resulted from an estimated 150 centimeters (5 feet) of new snow that fell in the Swiss Alps since Sunday, said Martin Schneebeli, of the federal avalanche research center, located in Davos.

"This is one of the largest snowfalls we've had," he said. "It's the worst since the winter of 1984-85, 15 years ago." The situation is expected to improve "because there is not as much snow coming in the next days," said Roland Meister, an avalanche forecaster.

Lives are claimed almost every winter, especially those of skiers and snowboarders who leave designated tracks, but this winter, thus far, has seen 12 people killed in avalanches in Switzerland. The particularly bad winter of 1969-70 saw 56 people lose their lives, buried under cascades of snow. In 1985, 11 passengers in cars were swept away in snowslides on the Tasch-to-Zermatt route.

Roads and railroad tracks were closed for safety reasons in parts of the Swiss Alps, including the key Gotthard Tunnel route between Italy and Switzerland. That route was opened late Wednesday.

While some areas in Switzerland's central region, the Bernese Oberland, remained cut off by heavy snowfalls, train service was mostly restored Wednesday after 24 hours of disruption, although trains in the Zurich area continued to run late.

Some 1,500 passengers at Zurich's Kloten Airport had to be put up in hotels because of travel delays at Swissair's hub. On Wednesday, the airport was reporting delays of up to three hours.

Even the Swiss post, famed for its punctuality, faced problems. At Interlaken, in hard-hit middle Switzerland, the post office had to deliver mail by boat.

Thousands of tourists were stranded in mountain resorts, unable to leave because of the heavy snow accumulation. Some resorts, including Grindelwald, helicopter out some tourists.

Other tourists were being housed in bunkers built decades ago as bomb shelters.

A record snowfall trapped an estimated 6,000 tourists in the popular Tyrol area of Austria, with many still unable to leave after five days. Reuters reported that the Austrian Army on Wednesday

airlifted supplies to tourists in the resort of Galtür.

Icy conditions also resulted in accidents, which blocked the Innal expressway for several hours.

In Eastern Europe, an avalanche in northwestern Romania blocked a highway, although no injuries were reported. The Associated Press said.

With severe weather moving south, Slovenia's Ljubljana airport was also closed.

In Italy, there were serious traffic problems due to wind, rain and snow and a landslide alert was issued in one area where serious mudslides claimed 100 lives last year.

BRITAIN: Brink of Recession Is Near, Bank of England Warns

Continued from Page 1

nize how quickly the economy was slowing," said David Mackie, an economist at J.P. Morgan & Co. Like most private-sector economists, Mr. Mackie contended that the economy has been throttled by the inflation-fighting zeal of the Monetary Policy Committee.

The committee, set up and given control over interest rates just days after the government of Prime Minister Tony Blair took power in 1997, drove rates up to a peak of 7.5 percent last summer to prevent high wage increases from stoking inflationary pressures. Those increases and the subsequent rise in the value of the pound have stymied British manufacturers and then fed into the broader economy.

Many analysts now predict the economy will slide into recession, marked by a decline in output, during the first half of this year before recovering.

"The risks are very much on the downside," Mr. Mackie said. He predicted that the bank would lower rates to 4 percent by the end of this year.

Mervyn King, the bank's deputy director, declined to comment on whether the bank's past interest-rate moves were wrong in hindsight, saying only that the Monetary Policy Committee did its best to assess the latest economic data.

He also stressed that the slowdown of the global economy as a result of financial crises in Asia, Russia and lately Brazil represented "quite a significant change" in economic circumstances.

Still, he acknowledged that the committee had found the policymaking difficult in its early days. "We are all a little older, perhaps a little wiser," Mr. King said.

In its report, the central bank projected that inflation would remain around the government-mandated target of 2.5 percent for the next two years. But

it said that some of the nine members on the Monetary Policy Committee believe the inflation trend will run about 0.2 percentage point lower because of the weakness of the global economy and productivity gains in Britain.

The idea that inflation could run at or below target was regarded as good news for the inflation-prone economy.

"For the first time in a generation, people expect low inflation," Mr. King said. "And for most of last year inflation was close to the target."

Consumers Urged to Buy More

The Bank of England governor, Eddie George, said Wednesday that higher domestic demand was needed in industrialized countries to stem the slowdown arising from loss of exports, Bloomberg News reported from London.

"We can afford to see higher domestic demand," Mr. George said at a conference.

reliable information. But Mr. Podvig said he was not as worried as Mr. Postol about Russia's early-warning problems.

"If you consider Cold War scenarios, a lack of early warning is a really bad thing," he said. "You can come up with all kinds of first-strike scenarios."

"But I'm not that pessimistic. My view is that, even if Russia has no early warning capability, no radars, no satellites, and still relies on intercontinental ballistic missiles and launch-on-warning, in any crisis, Russia will still have to be taken seriously."

So far, little has been done to reduce the threat of nuclear miscalculation. At a summit meeting in September in Moscow, Mr. Clinton and Mr. Yeltsin announced plans to share early-warning missile-launching information.

"It was a good first step," Mr. Postol said, "but the administration hasn't done anything to implement it, and they have no vision of follow-on steps."

RUSSIA: Deterioration of Nuclear-Attack Warning System Raises Fears Among Analysts

Continued from Page 1

early-warning risks, the launching of a Norwegian scientific rocket in 1995 triggered a false alarm that was reported all the way up to Mr. Yeltsin.

At the time of the 1983 alarm, the Soviet satellites positioned to detect U.S. ballistic-missile launchings had been on station for only about a year. Launched into a high elliptical orbit, the satellites did not look directly down at the Earth; rather, they peered at an angle, depending on infrared waves to identify the hot exhaust of a rocket.

To keep tabs on U.S. missile fields, an array of satellites was needed. The full early-warning system of that era had nine satellites. On the day of the false alarm, there were seven in orbit, according to Paul Podvig, a research associate at the Center for Arms Control, Energy and Environmental Studies in Moscow.

Mr. Podvig said the seven satellites were sufficient to cover all the U.S.

missile fields. That same system is still in use, but because of its crippling financial problems Russia has not put an early-warning satellite into orbit since April. Some existing satellites ceased working last year, and, according to Mr. Podvig, the system now has only three active satellites.

The Soviets created a second satellite system in the late 1980s — this one in geostationary orbit, meaning that these satellites remain fixed above one place on the Earth's surface. Two of these are still functioning, Mr. Podvig said, with one sited to cover some of the gaps in the original array of satellites.

Gaps remain, however. Every 24 hours, the high elliptical satellite system is blind during two periods; one is nearly six hours long, the other about an hour long, Mr. Podvig said. Even with the help of the geostationary satellite, there is a daily gap of about three hours, he said.

Over the last five or six years, Russia kept the configuration working all the

time," Mr. Podvig said. "But it started disintegrating at the beginning of 1998. The situation in the last six years wasn't good, but they had reserves. They kept it working. Now, they have used up those reserves. The problem is serious."

Theodore Postol, a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, said the satellites in geostationary orbit were incapable of looking down into any ocean. That, he said, leaves Russia with "no space-based early warning against the most potent threat its land-based forces face: the U.S. Trident submarine-launched ballistic missiles."

Mr. Postol said Russia's system of ground-based early-warning radar had also been degraded because many installations were built on the periphery of the Soviet Union, in former Soviet republics that now are independent countries. The situation is risky, he said, in that it could drive Russia more and more toward making a quick decision to retaliate, one that would be based on less

reliable information. But Mr. Podvig said he was not as worried as Mr. Postol about Russia's early-warning problems.

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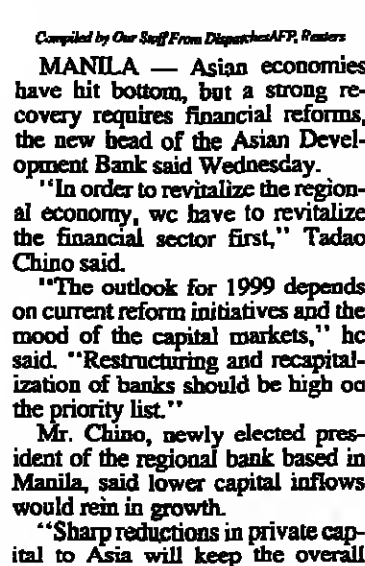
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New Head at ADB Says Banks Must Reform



it would slash by more than 40 percent the size of an equity-linked bond issue under which it was to sell part of its stake in a leading bank.

It had expected to issue \$1.3 billion worth of convertible bonds underwritten by Goldman, Sachs & Co., but the size had been cut to

\$765 million because of poor demand, analysts said.

"Investors were not prepared to put this much money into Asia at one time," said Richard Gnodd, co-head of investment banking in Asia at Goldman Sachs, which arranged the sale. (AFP, Bloomberg)

The five-hour shutdown of Kia's three factories, which employ 13,300 people and can make 2,500 cars, small trucks and recreational vehicles a day, cost 5.6 billion won (\$4.8 million) in lost production, said Kim Sam Sung, a Kia spokesman.

"This is a warning shot," a union spokesman said. "We will seek cooperation from Hyundai Motor workers and widen the strike unless the management accepts our demands."

Separately, Hyundai Motor Co., said it had suffered a record loss in 1998 as the nation's severest recession in nearly half a century had cut off demand for a decade undermined domestic demand.

The company suffered a net loss of 33 billion won for the full year, its largest loss since it was founded in 1967.

Earnings will be officially announced around Feb. 26.

Agence France-Presse

TAIPEI — The Finance Ministry proposed a package of medium and long-term measures Wednesday to strengthen Taiwan's capital markets and bolster the flagging economy.

The proposals include laws to protect investors, strengthen the management of listed companies, expand trading in the stock market, and better supervise brokerages, investment houses and financial institutions.

"This medium-long-term plan is to build a lasting and efficient capital market mechanism to ensure stable economic development in the

stitutions would be permitted to increase their stock market investments, holding companies would be allowed to list on the exchange or on the over-the-counter market, laws would be enacted to encourage mergers and acquisitions of listed companies, and private enterprises involved in major public construction projects would be allowed to raise money in the financial markets.

The proposals followed three short-term measures the ministry adopted Monday to bail out the ail-

tions on margin fund providers buying into stocks, required listed companies to improve disclosure of information and promised an investigation into stock market speculation.

The series of efforts come after Taiwan's economic growth last year slipped to 4.83 percent, the lowest in 15 years. Officials have forecast that growth in 1999 will be an even slower 4.74 percent as the country continues to suffer from the financial crisis in Asia.

February 10, 1999

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The data in the list above is the N.A.V. applied by the fund groups to Standard & Poor's Microcap SA. It is copied and reformatted into the list below being transmitted to the IHT. Standard & Poor's Microcap and the IHT do not warrant the quality or accuracy of the list, the date of the performance of the Fund Groups and will not be liable for the date of Fund Group in any extent. The list is not and shall not be deemed to be an offer by the IHT or Standard & Poor's Microcap to sell securities or investments of any kind. Investments can fall as well as rise. Past performance does not guarantee future success. It is advisable to seek advice from a qualified independent adviser before investing.

INTERNATIONAL INVESTING

Investors Look Beyond Romania's Economic Troubles

By Peter S. Green
International Herald Tribune

BUCHAREST — Romania may be reeling from a violent weeklong strike and teetering on the brink of default, but despite the bad news, some investors have been putting money into the country's shrinking economy.

They bet that eventually Romania's highly educated work force, comprehensive if outdated industrial base and ample farmland and raw materials — including a recent offshore oil find — will turn the country of 23 million into a stable and lucrative market.

Al Tolstoy, president of Mohi-Fon, a Canadian-owned mobile telephone operator, last month decided to invest a further \$155 million in Romania, expanding networks and services.

He did so even after spending a few nervous days last month preparing to evacuate key staff if the miners marched on Bucharest and pillaged the city center, as they did four times in the early 1990s.

"Romania has a pretty big underground economy," Mr. Tolstoy said. "We figure the GDP here could be as much as half under-

ground." That translates into vast potential sales for Mohi-Fon's Connex network.

Despite official average salaries of about \$149 a month, Connex has signed up 330,000 Romanians whose mobile phone bills average from \$50 to \$60 a month.

"Growth is 210 percent year on year in mobile phones," Mr. Tolstoy said, "and we've only got 2.8 percent penetration."

Mr. Tolstoy is not alone in his enthusiasm. On the day that 10,000 coal miners threatened to march on Bucharest unless their pay was raised and unprofitable mines were reopened, a British company called Allied Deals bought a copper mine and smelter for \$37 million.

Three days later, the Turkish oil company Alkaya paid about \$740 million for Petromidia, one of Romania's largest refineries, reportedly to process Caspian Sea oil.

"Investors can find some real bargains if they are willing to wade through the uncertainty and have patience and have reliable people on the ground," as managers, said Roger Monson, chief equity strategist at Rabobank in London.

The French automaker Renault

SA is in talks about the purchase of the Dacia car works, whose cheap skilled workers could help the French compete with Volkswagen AG and Fiat SpA.

And Scania AB, the Swedish maker of buses and trucks, is in talks to buy the truckmaker Roman and the tractor company Tractorul.

Valentin George, a U.S.-trained investment banker at Bascorex, a soon-to-be privatized Romanian bank, said the opportunities for direct investors in Romania now were widespread.

"There's a fire sale in privatization," Mr. George said. "This is the time to buy in Bucharest. Prices are low, and the government is willing to sell."

Romania's consumer market has attracted others besides Connex. Last week, the U.S.-based Atomic Media Group inaugurated a \$5 million-plus Romanian music-television channel that now reaches 750,000 homes, and Coca-Cola Beverages PLC spent \$15 million (\$24.6 million) on two bottling plants purchased from a local company.

Despite the confidence these investors have shown, reforms are far behind schedule.

Last weekend, the Parliament approved an austerity program that it hopes will bring new credits this month from the International Monetary Fund to meet \$2.8 billion due on foreign loans this year.

"The risk of a serious financial crisis in Romania this year is high," analysts at Credit Suisse First Boston wrote in a recent report.

The Romanian currency, the leu, has fallen 12 percent against the U.S. dollar since Jan. 1.

The economy, which contracted 5.3 percent last year after a 6.6 percent decline in 1997, is expected to shrink 2 percent more this year. Industrial production fell about 20 percent last year.

An inflation rate of 30 percent is seen as possible this year, and forecasters say that unemployment will hit 12 percent.

Some key companies have been privatized. Societe Generale SA of France recently acquired the Romanian Development Bank, and Hellenic Telecommunications Organization, the Greek telephone company known as OTE, bought control of RomTelecom.

But little headway has been made on a list of 149 unprofitable state-owned enterprises that the IMF says

must be closed, and there is little money to help cushion the blow for workers who lose jobs.

"They have done some things," Mr. Monson said of government economic steps, "but investors have meanwhile raised their standards of acceptance after giving the benefit of the doubt to Russia and getting badly burned. Basically, good enough isn't good enough any more."

Prime Minister Radu Vasile says he knows that Romania, he told Parliament last weekend, must forgo the black market for "a real market economy."

He said, "Wealth amassed overnight, fiscal evasion and a parallel economy have cost us enough."

Those words and steps recently taken, some international lenders and investors say, are a start.

"I think in the last four months, the current government has taken some very concrete efforts to reverse the start-and-stop pattern of past reforms," said Andrew Vorkink of the World Bank. "But a number of actions still need to be taken before the international community can provide additional money."

Very briefly:

• The European Parliament voted against exempting Eurobonds from a proposed withholding tax, casting aside British concerns that such action would trigger a flight of capital from the European Union. The parliament in Strasbourg, in a nonbinding vote, backed the proposed 20 percent levy on interest earned in one EU country by residents of another.

• U.S. mutual funds saw individual investors pull out \$1 billion in the week that ended Monday, said Trimbals.com, a research company in Santa Rosa, California.

• Vishesh Sanchar Nigam Ltd.'s sale of global depository receipts — equal to half a regular share — was oversubscribed, according to Credit Suisse First Boston and Salomon Smith Barney Inc., coordinators of the sale of part of the Indian government stake in the only international phone company in the country.

• Singapore halved its sale of Development Bank of Singapore Ltd. bonds because it couldn't find enough buyers, bankers said. In Taiwan, Delta Electronics Inc. — a company involved in one of the world's fastest-growing industries — had the same problem and cut its sale by a quarter.

• Bangkok Bank PLC plans to sell 10 billion baht to 20 billion baht (\$2.71 billion to \$5.42 billion) of equity-linked bonds in the first half of the year to raise capital to offset loan defaults.

• Industrial Bank of Japan Ltd. will sell about 150 billion yen (\$1.5 billion) of preferred securities as Japan's largest lenders scramble to replace capital drained by write-offs of bad loans and losses on securities.

Bloomberg

SCHWAB: While Its Rivals Struggle With the Internet, the Brokerage Dominates On-Line Trading

Continued from Page 11

conduct transactions or open accounts. The new Schwab plans to expand those centers and build at least 200 new ones to form what Mr. Pottruck calls the "social fabric" of investing. They will hold seminars and training sessions. A client who sets up a child's trust, say, might get an e-mail invitation to a live discussion on custody accounts and estate planning.

"The way Barnes & Noble should compete with Amazon.com is not to offer books at lower prices, but to create links between on-line and local services," Mr. Pottruck said. "How do you tie the two together and build relationships? That's the next phase on the Internet business."

Schwab is also moving the line in

the sand between itself and Wall Street investment banks, which typically work for companies that sell stock as well as customers who trade shares. That is a role that Schwab has often criticized as leading to conflicts of interest.

Schwab still does not underwrite securities on its own, avoiding becoming an investment banker for companies. But it has agreed to join investment banks that act as lead underwriters in offering Schwab customers a chance to buy new issues, recognizing that it cannot compete across the board with the big brokerages without giving customers access to some hot initial public offerings.

Perhaps the biggest initiative is its "signature services." The plan is to retain more wealthy customers, especially those with more than \$500,000 in assets. Many will get a

team of perhaps eight designated consultants to help manage their portfolios.

And though the company does not plan to advertise it, the wealthiest, if they choose, will be able to have a single broker monitor their investments.

Much of this high-end push is part of Schwab's unstated goal to remove Merrill from the top of the hierarchy of retail investing. Schwab acknowledges that the people it loses to full-service firms tend to be the wealthiest clients, who say that they have graduated from Schwab's do-it-yourself ethic to a full-service broker.

Part of the answer is Schwab's network of fee-based investment advisers. Through these 400 advisers so far, the firm refers customers who do not want to manage their own

money to professionals who invest for them through Schwab.

But for those who do not want to rely on advisers, Schwab's latest initiative is to convince wealthy customers that they can control their own money and get the help they need.

Merrill, whose nearly \$1.5 billion in customer assets is about triple what clients invest through Schwab, intends to be a major player on-line as well as in its traditional brokerage business, said Jim Wiggins, a spokesman.

"We have over 400,000 clients with \$300 billion in household assets who already use Merrill on-line to actively manage their accounts, and we are just scratching the surface," Mr. Wiggins said.

"Anyone who thinks that Merrill Lynch won't be using the Internet to

magnify the value we deliver to clients is making a major miscalculation."

In fact, Schwab still often acts like an underdog, perhaps because some of its good fortune could easily be short-lived.

Schwab will face more competition from full-service brokerage firms in coming months, even though many of them face pressures from their brokers not to lure clients on-line. Moreover, 20 or so low-cost on-line trading companies are nipping at Schwab's heels.

Julio Gomez of Gomez Advisors Inc., an Internet consultancy that rates on-line trading firms, ranks Schwab's Web service as No. 8 out of 20, in part because its \$29.95 fee for each trade is at the top end of an industry where \$8 trades are no longer unusual.

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SPORTS

Celtics Wilt the Heat After 3-Year Drought

The Associated Press
 Antoine Walker scored 31 points to help the Boston Celtics beat the weary, injury-depleted Miami Heat for the first time in three years, 108-101.

NBA Roundup

Walker, scoring from the point and the paint, shot 12-for-27 and had 10 rebounds Tuesday night in Miami. Kenny Anderson scored 22 points and

30 points, and the Hawks pulled away in the fourth quarter to beat the Bulls before a sellout crowd at the United Center.

The Bulls, with only seven players on the roster, scrapped and hustled as they had done while splitting their first two road games. But Atlanta's talent won out, and Tom Izzo, Chicago's first-year coach, dropped his home debut.

Toni Kukoc, who shot just 6-of-21, and Mark Bryant scored 16 points each to lead the Bulls.

June 90, Minnesota 79 In Dallas, Karl Malone scored 31 points, including seven straight in a fourth-quarter surge, as Utah won its third straight.

Malone, who scored 21 and 28 points as Utah beat Chicago and the Los Angeles Lakers in its first two games, put the Jazz ahead 76-74 with a basket and 6:37 to go. The Jazz never looked back against the new-look Mavericks, who played well for three quarters.

Kings 112, Suns 86 Chris Webber had 28 points and 20 rebounds, and rookie Jason Williams scored 22 as Sacramento ended an 11-year, 24-game losing streak in Phoenix.

All five starters reached double figures for the Kings, who hadn't won in Phoenix since Jan. 30, 1988.

Coffey Williamson added 18 points for Sacramento.

SuperSonics 80, Warriors 71 Gary Payton scored 20 points, and Scott Hastings improved to 3-0 for the first time since the 1993-94 season.

The Sonics opened up a comfortable lead after one quarter, and the Warriors never out the deficit to single digits the rest of the way.

Payton played just three quarters as Seattle built a 70-51 lead, and reserves played the fourth period for both teams. John Starks led the Warriors with 12 points.



John Wallace of the Toronto Raptors reacting to a call against his team.

Arnott's Goal: Too Late

Shot Scores After Buzzer as Devils Lose, 4-3

The Associated Press

Todd Bertuzzi scored on a spectacular spinning backhand with 8:36 to play and the Vancouver Canucks added to New Jersey's home woes by just barely holding on to beat the Devils, 4-3.

An apparent game-tying goal by Jason Arnott was scored a fraction of a second after the final buzzer on Tuesday night. The green light came on and

Jaromir Jagr had a goal and an assist, giving the two-time NHL scoring champion 18 points in his last seven games and a league-high 77 for the season.

Sabres 1, Senators 1 Wayne Primeau scored 2:14 into the third period as the visiting Buffalo Sabres salvaged a tie with Ottawa.

Alexei Yashin, the Ottawa captain, scored his 23rd goal at 6:55 of the second period. All four games between the teams this season have reached overtime.

The Senators have lost only two of their last 20 games (13-2-5).

Red Wings 5, Predators 2 In Nashville, Brendan Shanahan keyed a four-goal second period with a goal and an assist as the Detroit Red Wings beat the Predators.

The victory snapped a two-game losing skid for the two-time defending Stanley Cup champions, who had been 1-3-1 over their previous five. The Red Wings got going by scoring three goals off just nine shots within the first eight minutes of the second.

Flames 2, Avalanche 1 In Denver, the Colorado Avalanche's franchise-record 12-game winning streak ended as Theo Fleury and Andrei Nazarov scored to lift the Flames.

Ken Wregget, sidelined by a back injury since Nov. 3, made 28 saves to help the Flames hand Colorado its first loss since a defeat at Detroit on Jan. 9.

Bruins 2, Oilers 2 Byron Dafoe made 31 saves for his sixth shutout of the season and the visiting Bruins got two third-period goals to beat the Edmonton Oilers.

P.J. Axelsson, a right wing, and Anson Carter, left wing, scored third-period goals for the Bruins, who were outshot 31-27, including 17-4 in the third.

27 Down, Princeton Wins

By Kathy Orton

Washington Post Service

PHILADELPHIA — Nearly every season, with astonishing predictability, Penn and Princeton find themselves locked in a battle for first place in the Ivy League.

Tuesday night, before a deafening capacity crowd of 8,722 at the Palestra, the teams hooked up in one of the most

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

memorable games in league history as Princeton produced one of the greatest comebacks the college game has seen. The Tigers came back from a 27-point second-half deficit to win, 50-49, and seize control of the conference race.

After trailing, 29-3 late in the first half and 33-9 at halftime, Princeton (16-4, 7-0 Ivy League) kept alive its 11-game winning streak by outscoring Penn, 41-16, early in the second half, the Quakers led, 40-13. Penn (14-4, 6-1) went scoreless the final three minutes.

The Division I record for largest deficit overcome to win a game is 32, when Duke came back to defeat Tulane in 1950.

With 2 minutes 14 seconds remaining, Princeton took its first lead when its freshman center, Chris Young, made a hook shot. Penn (14-4, 6-1), which went scoreless the final three minutes, then had a chance to win, but Matt Langell's jumper from near the right baseline hit the front of the rim.

The 96-year-old Penn-Princeton rivalry is like few others in college basketball. No two teams have ever dominated a conference like these two have. Since the 1956-57 season, when Ivy League teams officially began to play basketball against each other, only six times has the champion not been either the Quakers or the Tigers.

And because the Ivy League is one of only two conferences in Division I men's basketball not to have a conference tournament, this season series usually decides who represents the league in the NCAA tournament.

Since Coach Bill Carmody took over for Pete Carril in 1996, Princeton has not lost an Ivy game — a 35-0 record.

New Browns Go With Youth

The Associated Press

CANTON, Ohio — For nearly three hours, the new Cleveland Browns followed their expansion draft game plan to perfection by selecting young, inexpensive National Football League players with potential.

But in the closing seconds, the team decided it was time to bring back an old name to add to its new roster.

"With their 37th and final selection," said Gene Washington, the league's director of player development, "the Browns select Antonio Langham." And just like that, Langham, a former Brown who was a bust with the San Francisco 49ers, was back in Cleveland.

Surrounded by bronzed Hall of Fame busts of Jim Brown, Lou Groza,

Leroy Kelly and other Browns, Cleveland started building with no-name players on Tuesday in the expansion draft. Priming for their return this season after a three-year absence, Cleveland selected a Detroit center, Jim Pyne, with its first pick.

Drafting Pyne No. 1 set the tone for a draft in which the Browns spent wisely — only two players have salary cap costs over \$1 million — and loaded up on young offensive linemen and defensive backs. Cleveland used 10 of its 37 picks on defensive backs and 9 on the offensive front.

The Browns also added five linebackers, four running backs, four wide receivers, four defensive linemen, and one quarterback, Tampa Bay's Scott Milanovich.

Sprewell Out for 3 to 6 Weeks

New York Times Service

NEW YORK — Latrell Sprewell, the controversial player whom the New York Knicks tasked their image to acquire in hopes of improving their chances of a championship, will miss three to six weeks because of a stress fracture of the right heel.

What was thought to be just a precautionary magnetic resonance imaging test Tuesday afternoon revealed an injury that could leave the team without Sprewell for half of the strike-shortened 50-game season, if he is out for six weeks.

"It is tough because everyone was excited to see how the talent would mesh," said Dave Checketts, president and chief executive officer of Madison Square Garden, who took the public-relations gamble and made the deal for Sprewell on Jan. 21.

"Obviously, I'm disappointed," said Sprewell, who played in just two regular-season games for the Knicks after sitting out 14 months because of the strike, lockout, and his 68-game suspension for choking P.J. Carlesimo, coach of his former team, the Golden State Warriors, in 1997.

DENNIS THE MENACE



"I DON'T HAVE ANY FRIENDS."

PEANUTS



"HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO BUY SOME HAND-DRAWN VALENTINES TO GIVE TO YOUR FRIENDS?"

CALVIN AND HOBBS



"CALVIN, WHAT ARE YOU DOING? YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE ON THE SCHOOL BUS! GET OVER HERE!"

WIZARD OF ID



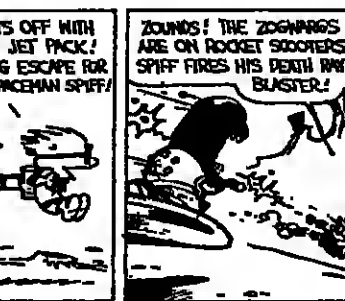
"I BROUGHT THE CAKE."

NON SEQUITUR



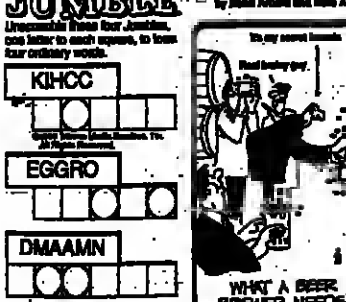
"I'M MOVING MY PICTURE TO TALK TO MY ATTORNEY, DOT COM."

DOONESBURY



"DO YOU THINK THE ALBIS ARE RE-REGISTERED BY HISTORY?"

JUMBLE



"I DON'T FEEL SORRY FOR PEOPLE WHO LIVE WHERE IT NEVER SHOWS."

GARFIELD



"YES, MRS. NOSTRUM? YOUR CLOTHESLINE? OH-HUH?"

BEEBLE BAILEY



"HEY! THE GREEN ARMY MUST HAVE STOLEN MY BATTLE PLANS!"

BLONDIE



"COULD YOU TAKE THIS PLEASE?"

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ART BUCHWALD

Zippity Doodah

NEW YORK — The big news from Hollywood is that a movie studio (Columbia) has announced that it is going to cut screenwriters in on the big money. The reason this is major news is that the motion picture companies have never put writers in the same class as big-time actors and directors.

Writers were ignored when the grosses were split up. Now Columbia (a.k.a. Sony) says it will give name writers up to 2 percent of the gross, besides the money they are paid to write the script.

Zippity doodah. Once the motion picture pays back its costs we will all be driving around in Rolls Royces on clover.

But there's the rub — the phrase "once the costs of the motion picture are recouped."

Having had a slight experience with trying to collect profits from the movie "Coming to America," I am going to warn all the writers not to get their hopes up. Almost no motion picture

makes money. The greatest blockbusters wind up in the red. It has nothing to do with the film — it has to do with the bookkeeping.

Say "My Wild Irish Bourbon" turns out to be the biggest hit of the year, grossing a minimum of \$800 million, with the Tanzanian theaters still waiting to report in.

The head of the studio, with tears in his eyes, tells the people entitled to a piece of the gross, "We lost our shirts."

"How is that?"
"Besides prints, advertising and cellular telephones, we spent \$400,000 for new Porches for our executives, \$1 million for our distributors' trip to Turkey, \$2 million to refurbish my offices and another million for reserved parking places."

"It's a pity the picture went under because we all had high hopes for it. That's why we spent \$8 million to dub it in Hungarian."

"I want to thank you all for what you have done. Maybe the next time we'll see a light at the end of the tunnel — unless we have to pay for the tunnel."

Cheers and Boos in Argentina

The Associated Press

BUENOS AIRES — The Oscar nomination of the film "Tango" for best foreign film received a mixture of cheers and boos in Argentina. A tango dancer who appears in the film, an Argentine-Spanish joint venture, and a critic said they were pleased, but another critic called the film "absurd."

Juan Carlos Copes, the dancer, praised the Spanish director, Carlos Saura, for his "fresh look" at Argentina's popular music. "Every time we film tango, we put on a hat and show the same stereotype. But this film shows the protagonist's feelings to the music of tango," said Copes, a star of the Broadway show Tango Argentino.

But the film critic Eduardo Anin said: "It treats tango in a very superficial way. It's the kind of film to be shown at airports. I felt sad and angry at the domination."

Two French Heroes Battle Hollywood's Hordes

By Alan Riding
New York Times Service

PARIS — In their 30 comic-book adventures to date, Asterix and Obelix have repeatedly outfoxed the Roman invaders of 50 B.C., thanks to a magic potion concocted by a Druid elder. But now far more is at stake. In their first screen outing, "Asterix and Obelix Against Caesar," the feisty Gallic villagers have again been called on to save France, but this time from Hollywood and its marauding blockbusters.

Of course it could be said the war has already been lost. But although French movies accounted for only 27 percent of tickets sold here in 1998, their worst performance in years, the entire French industry is counting on winning at least one battle.

And for this the Gauls have even been given an extra dose of Hollywood's own magic potion: money. Opening in a record 764 theaters last week and costing \$48.3 million, "Asterix et Obelix Contre Cesar" is the most expensive French-language movie ever made.

Directed and co-written by Claude Zidi, it is produced by Claude Berri, long a successful director and now a mini-mogul of the French movie scene. French investors have put up half the money, with Italians and Germans providing the balance.

The live-action film also has a strong cast, with Christian Clavier as Asterix, Gerard Depardieu as Obelix, Roberto Benigni as Detritus, Caesar's treacherous sidekick, and the model Laetitia Casta as Falbala, Obelix's love interest.

That said, the battle has not started well, with the film being struck first by friendly fire. In the weeks preceding its release it was enormously promoted by French newspapers, which uniformly exploited the Rome-Hollywood analogy. It was, *Le Monde* proclaimed, "the image of resistance to American cinematographic imperialism." But when the reviews came in, many movie critics forgot their patriotic duty and were plain rude.

"Yes, I confess it, I am a traitor to French cinema," Andre Bercoff wrote in *France Soir*. "After a few minutes full of hope, I ended up bored senseless by Asterix and Obelix." *Le Parisien* asked, "Where did the magic potion go?" And *Liberation's* verdict was no less negative. "The move from comic book to film has fatally put an end to a dream," it said. "The bubble has burst."



Gerard Depardieu, left, is Obelix and Christian Clavier is Asterix.

Still, as Hollywood endlessly demonstrates, blockbusters with troubled scripts and lively special effects can easily survive bad reviews. In fact the big-budget Hollywood films that do well here year in year out are routinely savaged by French critics. And, as it happens, everything indicates that "Asterix and Obelix Against Caesar" has started well at the box office and is particularly liked by children under 14, who are usually accompanied by adults.

The film has some strong points. With its 60 actors bolstered by no fewer than 1,500 extras, the heroic Gauls do indeed seem to be taking on the entire Roman army. Clavier and Depardieu look their parts, while Benigni adds a touch of genuine Roman humor ("I am Etruscan, not Roman," Benigni protests).

But the best scenes come thanks to special

effects, as when Asterix is tossed into a Roman circus and successively confronts snakes, lions, tarantulas, crocodiles and an elephant.

The movie's strongest selling point, though, is the extraordinary popularity of the Asterix books, which have sold some 280 million copies in 85 languages since the first comic strip was published by Rene Goscinny and Albert Uderzo in 1959. Goscinny died in 1977 and Uderzo has published the last six books on his own.

France is Asterix's biggest market, with 95 million books sold to date, followed closely by Germany with 88 million sold. Some 20 million copies have been sold in Britain, but the books have not been marketed in the United States.

Thus, like Superman and Batman before them, Asterix and Obelix have a huge fol-

lowing outside their home territory, and this augurs well for foreign sales of dubbed versions of "Asterix and Obelix Against Caesar."

"I cannot see anything less than 10 million viewers," Bern told *Liberation*. France, unlike the United States, traditionally measures a movie's performance by the number of tickets sold rather than the box office take.

In the battle against Hollywood, of course, what really counts is how well the film does in France. Last year, although total movie attendance here rose to 170 million, largely as a result of "Titanic" (21 million), the French industry's share of the domestic market fell to 27 percent, from 34.5 percent in 1997. Three French films did well — "Le Diner des Cons" (8.5 million), "Les Condois du Temps" (8 million) and "Toussaint des Condois" (6.2 million) — but significantly, all were comedies aimed at a mass market. The most acclaimed art house film of the year, Eric Zola's "Dreamlife of Angels," did no more modestly (1.2 million).

In the case of "Asterix and Obelix Against Caesar," 5 million tickets sold at home and another 5 million abroad will take it safely out of the red, but that may suffice to claim victory over Hollywood. More likely, the seemingly endless debate about why French movies do not do better at home and abroad will continue. And if the debate does not change, it is because the structure of the French movie industry remains unchanged.

French productions must account for 40 percent of films shown on television, while Canal-Plus, the pay-television movie and sports channel, is required to invest heavily in French movies. Thus, 120 to 140 new French films are released here every year, far more than the domestic theater market can absorb. Add to that the distributors' preference for Hollywood blockbusters over low-budget local fare and it is easy to see why many French films — even good ones — can go almost unnoticed here.

In the best of cases, then, "Asterix and Obelix Against Caesar" may be among the most popular French movies of the year. But alone, it seems, these hardy Gauls are unlikely to strike fear in Hollywood.

France likes to boast that it has the only European movie industry that has so far avoided being totally crushed by Hollywood, but increasingly it resembles a resistance movement inside an occupied country.

PEOPLE

A SMALL Danish museum has offered a \$50,000 reward for information about a Rembrandt painting and another work that were stolen two weeks ago. Rembrandt's "Portrait of a Lady" and Giovanni Bellini's "Portrait of a Young Man" were taken from the Nivaagaard Collection museum in Hoersholm, just north of Copenhagen on Jan. 28 by two men. The value of the Rembrandt has been estimated at up to \$16 million.

A former assistant to Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman is suing the couple, claiming they fired her without cause. Judith Gomez said she received "good or excellent" work evaluations during the five years she worked for the movie stars, helping them select clothes and with household chores. But in a Superior Court lawsuit in Los Angeles, Gomez claims she was fired July 31 and "is now unable to obtain employment-related benefits at the same salary she was earning." She said she was required to sign a contract last

July, but was not told it included a clause allowing them to "fire her for any reason." Gomez is seeking unspecified damages from the couple and two of their other employees.

The cellist Yo-Yo Ma has been named the winner of the 1999 Glenn

Gould Prize. Created by the Glenn Gould Foundation and intended as a tribute by the people of Canada to the life and work of Gould, the Canadian pianist and composer who died in 1982, the accolade for exceptional contribution to music and its communication carries an award of 50,000 Canadian dollars (about \$34,000). Previous winners include R. Murray Schafer, Yehudi Menuhin, Oscar Peterson and Toru Takemitsu.

While steering clear of Germany's debate over what a national Holocaust memorial should be, the director Steven Spielberg said Wednesday that his archive of interviews with survivors was still "in the wings" if Germany wants to include it. Spielberg, in Berlin for the screening of his Holocaust documentary "The Last Days" at the film festival, declined to comment on competing concepts for the memorial, but he indicated that he was still interested in having the archives of his Shoah Visual History Foundation as part of the project. Spielberg first made the suggestion in a *Time* magazine interview in November, and it reportedly was backed by Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder's culture adviser, Michael Naumann, but there was no mention of it in a new concept Naumann unveiled in December. After more than a decade of public debate, Parliament is to vote on the project this year.

Oprah Winfrey Sours on Television

The Associated Press

LONDON — Oprah Winfrey says daytime television has become a "vulgarity circus," and she is getting out when her contract expires in two years. In an interview with *The Sunday Times*, Winfrey attacked her rival Jerry Springer and said it was hard to return to television after shooting her latest movie, "Beloved."

"Coming off that wonderful film to be just interviewing more dysfunctional people was a letdown," she said. She called Springer's show a "vulgarity circus." "Unless you are going to kill people on the air, and not just hit them on the head with chairs, and unless you are going to have sexual intercourse then there comes a point when you have oversaturated yourself," she said.

"My contract has two years left, then I am getting out of such shows because I feel they are going to burn themselves out."



ALL DECKED OUT — A samba dancer, Elizabeth Rodrigues, getting some help at rehearsals for the opening of Rio's Carnival on Friday.



(out of the blue)

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